

SUSTAINABLE FAMILY WELL-BEING AMID SOCIO ECONOMIC CHANGES AND CHALLENGES THROUGH FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION

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ABSTRACT

This paper creates awareness on the contributions of Food Security and Nutrition on sustainability of family well-being despite chronic socio economic changes and challenges in our society today. It extracts information from the frontiers of knowledge through web-search, magazines, journals, text books while personal observations were also stressed. It examines the present socio economic conditions of present Nigerians as well as the challenges facing them. It discusses the concept of food security and nutrition. It emphasizes the positive solutions to sustain family members in Nigeria through food security and nutrition in order to foster their well-being. Furthermore, the factors that could facilitate food security and nutrition to enhance socio economic status of Nigerians were discussed. Finally, recommendations were made to sustain family well- being.

Keywords: Sustainable, wellbeing, socioeconomic, food security, nutrition.

INTRODUCTION

Food is one of the basic needs of man and Nigeria is facing escalating challenge to meet accelerating demand for sustainably-produced, nutritious food in the face of human

population pressure, resource scarcity, ecosystem degradation, and climate change. Food and Agricultural Organization (2006), stated that food insecurity is the absence of food security and applies to a wide range phenomena, from famine to periodic hunger to uncertain food supply. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013) defined insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. From the first perspective, food insecurity subjects humans most especially the vulnerable groups to the danger of malnutrition and associated impairment in health and conditions of abnormal functioning. From the other perspective, food insecure families are plagued with the anxiety of what to eat, how to eat and where to get it from. In all its forms, food insecurity is not only a threat to family wellbeing but also national development.

Families are the foundation of communities and play a critical role in the wellbeing of all family members. Families can only thrive if they are connected to, are valued by and have a sense of belonging in their own communities (Murray, 2011). Wellbeing also encompasses the experience of a range of human rights and opportunities. Family wellbeing is the sum of its parts. The family is made up of individuals, if each individual displays or reports positive well-being, the well-being of the family can be considered to be high. Family wellbeing is vital to thriving communities. Families, who are able to make informed decisions, manage their basic needs,

and tackle pressing human and community issues are better equipped to lead happy and healthy lives. A range of factors can affect family well-being, and investments in families contribute significantly to the social, psychological, and economic development of the nation.

Good nutrition is an important part of a family's health, wellbeing and quality of life. Many major causes of diseases (heart disease, diabetes, overweight and obesity, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and certain cancers) and death are related to poor nutrition and a lack of physical activity. Poor nutrition can also impact day-to-day life by affecting concentration, work or school performance. For children, a poor diet can have a significant effect on proper growth and development (OlaREWaju & Olaniyan, 2018). The first step to good nutrition is having access to food and being able to afford good food at all times, in essence being food secure. Food security simply means access by all people at all time to the food needed for an active and healthy life. It can also be defined as when all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs in order to live a healthy and protective life (Fasakin, 2015). Food security is a state of affairs where all people at all times have access to safe and nutritious food to maintain healthy and active life (Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 2008). Food security is in many dimensions, i.e. food availability, food access and stability of access. Food availability at household level is achieved when sufficient quantities of food are consistently available to all individuals within the household.

The concern of this paper is not just the achievement of family wellbeing but a sustainable family well-being. To live sustainably means to live in ways that conserve valuable resources for the future lives of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren - at least seven generations out. Sustainable activities in the family include but not limited to conservative economic and social activities which also include environmental resources and effective time and energy management. Efforts toward sustainable health and wellbeing may be evident in many aspects of life, particularly in choices related to food and nutrition, transportation, work, travel, voting, health habits, utility usage, community alliances, and consumption and disposal of clothing, appliances, and personal products.

Food security and nutrition is a concern to many developing and developed nations. Meeting the accelerating demand for nutritious food in the face of shrinking resources has tremendous economic, environmental, and social implications. Food supplies that provide ample calories but are deficient in key nutrients compromise nutritional status and can contribute to the added burden of non-communicable disease. Hidden hunger and obesity are two components of malnutrition (World Health Organization (WHO), 2014). According to WHO, 1.5 billion adults are overweight. Nearly 43 million children under five were overweight in 2010 (WHO, 2011). Sixty-five percent of the world's population live in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people than underweight (Uauy, 2011). These numbers underscore the fact that action is needed to fight undernourishment as well as over nourishment.

Contemporary Socio-economic Conditions in Nigeria

The socio-economic condition is one of such difficult conditions to describe in Nigeria. Socioeconomic status (SES) refers to an individual's position within a hierarchical social structure, which is one of the important determinants of health status and family well-being. It can be said to be the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control. According to Saifi and Mehmood (2011), socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analyzing a family's SES, the household income, earners' education, and occupation are examined, as well as combined income, versus with an individual, when their own attributes are assessed. Socioeconomic status is typically divided into three categories, high SES, middle SES, and low SES to describe the three areas a family or an individual may fall into. When placing a family or individual into one of these categories any or all of the three variables can be assessed.

After fifty three years of nationhood Nigeria still ranks among the poorest countries in the world, also ranks low in all socio economic indicators such as life expectancy, death rate, access to water, poverty rate, mortality rate, and crime rate, and still carries the tag of a developing economy. Nigeria is a classic illustration of an oxymoron, a poor country in the midst of abundant human and natural resources (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014).

Nigeria is classified as the lower middle income group by the World Bank (2014). The country is faced with a rising population, the over exploitation of natural resources, the tendency to focus on achieving short-term development objectives at the expense of longer term sustainability and a high poverty rate. Nigeria's very existence is not only threatened by the prevailing socio-economic conditions, but also by many disease conditions. People with relatively few resources may not have very good access to care services, or even transportation to get health care. They may not have the time to focus on their health, or sufficient education to realize the impact that certain elements have on their health. Priorities can vary also; one person might be trying to maintain good health, while another person is a single mother trying to maintain a family with a minimum wage job. The stress related to a person's socioeconomic status alone may impact his or her health. Regardless of the mechanism, there is a strong association between SES and health. Poverty is one of the contemporary socioeconomic problems affecting Nigeria as a third world country. It is a state of complete lack of minimal means of livelihood. Judging by the American standard, about eighty five percent (85%) of Nigerians are poor (George & Ukpong, 2013). This gives birth to incidence of high involvement of her citizens in criminal activities such as corruption, bribery and all types of immoral conducts.

The poor lacks the means to satisfy the basic needs of life. They do not have personal assets necessary to produce income and wealth (Famoyin, 2007). An average Nigerian family may be unable to afford three (3) square meals a day. In many parts of the world, poor people are regarded as people in the low socioeconomic cadre who cannot for one reason or the

other have economically productive role by economic standards to provide adequate income for themselves. Poor people in Nigeria are not only deprived of most material comfort of life but also cannot attain their maximum emotional and social development (Thompson, 2008). Low income and little education have shown to be strong predictors of nutrition as well as a range of physical and mental health problems, ranging from respiratory viruses, arthritis, coronary disease, and schizophrenia (Yasamy, Cross, McDaniell and Saxena, 2014).

In terms of education, the percentage of out of school children in a country shows what proportion of children are not currently participating in the education system and who are, therefore, missing out on the benefits of school. Statistics from United States Embassy in Nigeria (2012) have shown that in Nigeria, 30% of children of official primary school ages are out of school. Approximately 29% of boys of primary school age are out of school compared to 35% of girls of the same age. For children of primary school age in Nigeria, the biggest disparity was among the poorest and the richest children. Nearly 28% of female youth of secondary school age are out of school compared to 24% of male youth of the same age. For youth of secondary school age, the biggest disparity was among the poorest and the richest youth. Nigeria's literacy rate is estimated at 61%. Nigeria has a large number of out-of-school children and young adults with limited literacy and numeracy skills who have little hope of ever joining the formal workforce (Nigeria Education Fact Sheet, United States Embassy in Nigeria, 2012).

Food Security and Nutrition Issues in Nigeria

Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2006). From observation, majority of Nigerians residing in rural areas and about two-thirds engaged in crop and livestock production for their own use and market sales. Food and nutrition security is closely tied to agricultural productivity. This is because higher production on one's own farm or from one's livestock improves the food security status of the household and vice versa. However, malnutrition is pervasive in the entire country especially across people of similar age and other categories of individuals in the rural areas (Adepoju & Adejare, 2013).

Since 1970, Nigeria has been experiencing food insecurity (Nnakwe & Onyemaobi, 2013; Fasakin & Olugbamigbe, 2018). Between 1970 and 1979, the average annual deficit in per capital daily calorie intake was 24.4% and between 1980 and 1989 and from 1990-1996 it ranged between 23-58% and 28%, respectively (Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)/Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER), 1996). There has been a tremendous increase in prices of food over the years and deterioration in the living conditions of many households/families. The consequences are that the incomes of most households are no longer adequate for basic life sustenance (Akinbani & Akintade, 2008). The problem of food insecurity especially during the hungry period among rural households in Nigeria is long standing. This is because after harvesting most rural households are food secure as they have enough food from their own production. However, owing to inadequate processing and storage facilities and the fact

that these households have other important needs, they usually end up selling their excess produce at low prices during the harvesting period. Most times, they rely on market purchases since they do not have enough to subsist on, the year round.

Food insecurity can trigger conflict; the sharp increases in food prices in 2015, accompanied by cuts in food and fuel subsidies reduced real incomes of, mainly urban, populations and triggered food riots in many countries. Dispossession of assets, such as land or cattle, or other threats to food security, can fuel conflict. Reduced access to food may compound other forms of grievance and discontent, such as poverty, unemployment or marginalisation (Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), 2016). Olarewaju and Olaniyan (2018) observed that households in Abeokuta North Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria had poor access to food and only about 5% had good access to food. The underlying factors include poverty, time constraints, poor preservation methods, lack of storage devices, dense population, conflict, disaster and urbanization. Fasakin and Olugbamigbe (2018) discussed some of the drivers of food insecurity and poor nutrition in Nigeria as follows:

Poverty

Poverty is the state of having little or no money and few or no material possessions. It is one of the chief causes of food insecurity in low income and semi-low income countries. Poverty can be considered a chain reaction often affecting generation after generation, a chain reaction that often interferes with health care, food consumption, resources, transportation, living arrangements, proper clothing, water

supply, heat supply, electricity and phone service (VanFleet, 2002). In all its forms, it strips an individual of his/her economic stability and purchasing power. Poor people lack access (in the form of affordability) to sufficient resources to produce quality food. Even when food is available and cheap, poverty could make it inaccessible (i.e. unaffordable). Without economic resources and political voice, poor farmers may be forced on to less productive land possibly causing further environmental deterioration.

Population and Urbanization

One of the trending issues in the world is the issue of population growth. In fact it is estimated that by 2050 the world population would double its current figure and the greater share of the increase will be from Asia and Africa (FAO, 2016). Population growth increases the demand for food. Dense population amounts to poor access to food, when the population in a geographical location is more than the food available, it might not be able to serve them and poor food accessibility sets in. With most productive land already in use, there is pressure for this land to become more productive. Poor harvest and higher cost of living have led many poor farmers to migrate to cities to look for work. Expanding cities spread out across productive land, pushing food production further and further away from consumers. All these increase the cost of the activities associated with producing and transporting foods while decreasing the food security of the poor in cities (Fasakin & Olugbamigbe, 2018). The eating habits of the existing population and fair resolution to distribute resources that will dictate future food security.

Disasters and Conflicts

Droughts, floods, cyclones and pests can quickly wipe out large quantities of food as it grows or when it is under storage for later use. As well, seeds can be destroyed by such environmental dangers. Conflict can also reduce or destroy food production or storage as farmers flee to safety or become involved in the fighting. Productive land may be contaminated with explosives. Stored food seeds and breeding livestock may be eaten or destroyed by soldiers. In addition to this, conflict can obstruct the transportation of food produce from one area to another. A typical example is the insurgencies and crises in the north that determine the availability of some cereals and legumes in the southwestern part of the country. All these may lead to long term food shortages.

Poor Health

Without sufficient calories and nutrients, the body slows down, making it difficult to undertake the work needed to produce food. Without good health the body is also less able to make use of the food that is available. A hungry mother will give birth to underweight baby who then faces a future of stunted growth, frequent illness, learning disabilities and reduced resistance to disease(s). The HIV/AIDS pandemic has reduced food production in many affected countries as productive adults become ill or die, there is shortage in labour, dearth in resources, technical know-how to grow staples and commercial crops. Many households have shifted to cultivating survival foods or even leaving their fields, further reducing the food supply. By implication, it leads to malnutrition, low food production which in-turn leads to food insecurity (Fasakin & Olugbamigbe, 2018).

Constraints to Market Trade/Access

Many poor countries can produce staples more cheaply than rich nations. But as a result of barriers to trade or poor infrastructural development, such as long distance from markets, poor roads, and communication, access to markets is highly limited which makes profitability low. High transportation fare and tariffs also make it difficult for poor countries to compete in export markets against highly subsidized farmers in rich countries. Trade imbalances prevent poor countries from importing agricultural products that could enhance their food security.

Insufficient Water and Environment Damages

Food production requires massive amounts of water, it takes one cubic meter (1000 litres) of water to produce one kilogram of rice. Producing sufficient food is directly related to having sufficient water. Irrigation can ensure an adequate and reliable supply of water to increase yields of most crops by 100% to 400%. Increasing irrigation efficiency and limiting environmental damages through sanitation or reduced soil fertility are important for food availability. Where water is scarce and the environment is fragile, achieving food security may depend on what has been called virtual water, that is, importing food from countries with an abundance of water. This may be a more efficient use of scarce resource (Abimbola & Ikuejube, 2010).

Coping strategies are employed to mitigate the effect of not having enough food to meet the household needs. Some coping strategies are positive means of overcoming food shortage, for example off-farm employment. However, for many poor people coping strategies are negative, that is they have long

term detrimental effects. Examples of negative coping strategies are severe reduction in food consumption, selling productive assets, reducing expenditures on basic services as health, education and abnormal migration (Fasakin & Olugbamigbe, 2018; Fasakin, Akintoye & Adeyanju, 2018). In terms of crises, there are two options regarding food availability, protecting and modifying consumption, a diversification of its consumption or a reduction in the number of consumers in the family. Reducing a household consumption can range from limiting the size of an individual's portion to skipping, to whole meals (Igba, 2009).

Diversifying consumption usually means eating food that is less preferred and less expensive. Reducing the number of consumers is most often achieved by sending certain members of the family to live and work elsewhere. Often a good insecure household will reduce and modify consumption simultaneously. Common staples in most Nigerian homes are insufficient and do not provide a balanced meal in most homes. This has led to massive importation of foods and massive foreign debt (CBN, 2001, 2003). The right to an adequate standard of living, including food is recognized in the universal declaration of human right. Food security is a fundamental objective of development policy and still a major problem in most households of urban Nigeria (Abdullahi, 2002).

Epileptic Power supply

Poor infrastructure including epileptic power supply, inadequate supply of potable water, and the skewed distribution of available infrastructure in favour of urban areas are some of the factors that negatively affects agricultural development and food insecurity. Epileptic power

supply not only makes it difficult for farmers to adequately store and preserve their farm produce but also poses a threat on household food security. In cases of epileptic power supply, households find it difficult to store and preserve available food items.

Pests

Pests are unwanted and destructive insects or other animals that attacks crops and livestock. The threat the pose to crop production is one the key factors in food insecurity in Nigeria. Pests could lead to "a perfect storm" that threatens to destabilise national food security. According to BBC News (2011), biological threat such as pests and predators accounts for about a 40% loss in global production. Pest causes significant losses to farmers and threatens food security.

Men of the Underworld

The problem of theft is a serious issue in Nigeria most especially for peasant farmers. From observation, farmers have suffered great loss in the hands "men of the underworld" to the extent of total loss of farm produce.

Poor Cultural Food Practices

In addition to the aforementioned points, poor cultural food practice(s) manifest in two ways. First through food taboos which affect children and women making them vulnerable e.g. pregnant women is forbidden to eat eggs, snail, crawling creatures that can enhance the protein content in their food intake which is the chief need during this period. Bad nutrition during this period results in giving birth to unhealthy babies and even poor health during pregnancy. Secondly, the food sharing technique in families also has negative effect on

the children and women e.g. chicken lap for heads of families while the legs and the heads are for children. Also, gender inequality manifests in food sharing in homes. This even starts from the mother/parents, e.g. giving fleshy parts and bigger portions to male children while lesser quality and quantity is given to the girl child. They refer to males as *Adekunle* while girls are *Adetule*. This ultimately results in having more "man power" among males for national development than females. They make girls believe that they are second class citizens, and inferior to males.

Impact of Food Security and Nutrition on Sustainability of Family Wellbeing

There are of course tensions between family wellbeing and sustainable development. The satisfaction of human basic needs and wants has an impact on nation and their capacity to continue providing in the future. The challenge is that globally around a billion people do not have access to the food, water and energy they need to live a decent life, yet humanity is already putting too much pressure on the planet. As observed by Pinstруп-Anderson (2010) many developing countries are currently experiencing a nutrition transition. Lifestyles are becoming more urban and sedentary, with foods and drinks being more energy-dense and diets containing more processed foods, sugars, fats and animal products. The result is a triple burden of malnutrition: one part of the population is still undernourished; many also suffer from deficits of specific nutrients, in particular micronutrients; and others are overweight.

Family well-being is vital to thriving communities. Families, who are able to make informed decisions, manage their basic

needs, and tackle pressing human and community issues are better equipped to lead happy and healthy lives. A range of factors can affect family wellbeing, and investments in families contribute significantly to the social, psychological, and economic development of Nigeria. Effective reduction of food and nutrition insecurity requires a deliberate double effort: One is action to improve the access to income earning opportunities for today's hungry and to ensure social protection, including immediate access to food for the neediest. The other is investment in sustainable, longer-term agricultural growth and development. Action and behavioural change will be needed at all levels—individual, corporate, and public. Governments in all countries also have a key responsibility in establishing the enabling conditions for effective and sustainable improvements, within a framework of political stability and good governance.

They must have the political will to change priorities, mobilize public investment and reform institutions in favor of sustainable food and nutrition security. de Haen stated that a guiding principle must be combining measures to reduce hunger with investment in sustainable growth of food supplies. In many countries, this will require a focus on rural smallholders, representing the majority of the poor, but it must increasingly also address urban food security problems (National Research Council, 2012). Similarly, Hyacinth and Kwabena (2014) noted that food availability can be achieved through household production, market purchases, or food assistance. Stability of access (or secure access to enough food) can be ensured when households and all individuals within have adequate and preferred food at all times to maintain a healthy living.

Sustainable health and well-being is about balance, self- and other-awareness, reflective and thoughtful action, compassion, social justice, satisfaction, thriving and flourishing, connection, gratitude, community, resilience, generativity, awe and wonder among others are elements of sustainability. Gustafson, Gutman, Leet, Drewnowski, Fanzo and Ingram (2016) proposed seven food system metrics of sustainable nutrition security namely (1) food nutrient adequacy; (2) ecosystem stability; (3) food affordability and availability; (4) sociocultural wellbeing; (5) resilience; (6) food safety; and (7) waste and loss reduction. In order to achieve a sustainable family wellbeing food security and nutrition should be priorities to the government at all levels. Government spending needs to prioritize food insecurity in the aftermath of conflicts. All partners, including local authorities, need to join together with national governments and international organizations and other stakeholders for the future of food and nutrition security in a rapidly changing and urbanizing world. They need to join to prepare for a world where cities, towns and rural areas are on the front lines of humanitarian crises and will experience new levels of vulnerability.

The future of food and nutrition security policies for cities will require going beyond price-driven commodity policy approaches, also taking a more holistic multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary food system development approach. When food and agriculture decision makers deliberately balance specialized crop export for distant markets with diversified crop production to feed nearby cities, there are many consequences for food system research, development and governance, which will be needed to be assessed at every city-

region level. Sustainable and healthy diets can link urban and rural agendas. Recent work on the linkages between environmental and human nutrition and health is leading to a policy and implementation framework for "sustainable diets" that makes important connections between ecosystem health and human diets. Sustainable diets are those diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security, healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources (FAO, 2011).

Both publicly supported food safety nets and market systems, including the important role of the retail sector, are targets for healthy food access in the context of sustainable diets. Foods that are low in nutrient content, such as highly processed, high sugar and high fat content foods, are increasingly of concern and the object of policy restrictions in increasing numbers of cities in high and low-income countries (FAO, 2004). Beyond limiting unhealthy foods, urban decision makers including mayors, planners and other managers, are also identifying long term solutions to diseases like obesity through health-promoting planning measures in "healthy city" agendas (Morgan, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The parameters for measuring the socioeconomic status of individuals include education, occupation and income. These would be negatively affected without good nutrition that is available, accessible and affordable at all times for all (i.e.

food security). The major food security challenges facing individuals in Nigeria are food preservation technique despite bountiful yields/harvests of food crops by some. Individuals should engage in agriculture and the federal government should endeavour to find positive solution(s) to get standard preservation/storage techniques to boost and sustain the Nigerian family wellbeing. Good foods available to all at all times is the major solution to curb socioeconomic problems in Nigeria then good health, excellent manpower, quality life and high economic status would be a reality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Every individual should engage in Agricultural practice - plant food crops. Government should aid this by getting standard/good food preservation/storage techniques
- Government to construct good feeder roads (villages link to cities)
- Pay workers when due promptly
- Parents should treat both male and female equally with good quality foods
- Society should relax the food taboos that make children and mothers susceptible group

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