

The Role of Food and Nutrition in Achieving Sustainable Developmental Goal 2030 Through Food Security in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The importance of food and nutrition for family health and wellbeing in the Nigerian society cannot be overemphasized; it is the live wire of human existence. Nigeria over the years has depended on massive importation of food stuff to meet up with food demands of her thickening population. This paper discussed the role of food and nutrition in achieving sustainable developmental goal 2030 through food security in Nigeria. This has become necessary because no meaningful development can take place in a country where her citizenry are unhealthy due to food shortage. Adequacy in food production in Nigeria can lead to unprecedented economic growth, which would assist in the actualization of the MDG target of eradicating extreme hunger in Nigeria. It was noted that the loss of agricultural sector to the oil boom of the 1970s and insecurity that permeates and envelopes farming communities across the nation is a major setback to food security. The agricultural sector is now being crowded by only peasant farmers whom are also been hindered by insecurity. This is unlike when farming was highly commercialized and cash-crops were being exported for foreign exchange; thereby making food to be available for the Nigerian populace. The study therefore recommends that the Nigerian government should bounce back to reposition the agricultural sector and also tackle the problem of insecurity hindering farmers from their agricultural activities so as to foster sustainable developmental goal through food security in Nigeria.

Keywords: Food security - Sustainable Development – Food and Nutrition – Home Economics

INTRODUCTION

Food and nutrition is a major index of human existence and key to achieving sustainable development in any country. The importance of availability and accessibility of food by the citizenry of a country cannot be over emphasized. Food and nutrition is synonymous to life; a country cannot attain sustainable developmental goal 2030 when her citizens are in hunger for lack of food security. According to WHO (1995) and FAO (2013) food security is access to the food needed by all people to enable them live a healthy life at all times. Food security has become a major problem ravishing most developing countries like Nigeria. A situation which is notably a hindrance to

human and socio-economic development of a country. A hungry citizen is an angry citizen which could lead to diverse degree of problems in country thereby hindering development.

Food security is key to sustainability because it is a major need of humans. Food security is constitute a vital element of sustainability plans and a key concern for national security. It is crucial for the building and sustaining a healthy economy and achieving social and environmental wellness, which are the three bottom lines of sustainable development (Pérez-Escamilla, 2017; Fanzo, 2019).The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development. It provides a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. Zero hunger is one of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is calls for action by all countries in a global partnership. They recognize that eradicating poverty and other deprivations is inextricably linked with strategies that ameliorate health and education challenges, reduce inequality, and increase economic growth while finding solution to climate change and working to preserving nature.

Food security is basically concerned with access and availability of food, stability of supplies and the quality of the diet (Honfoga & Van den Boon, 2003). According to FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP) (2013), Nigeria have an energy intake of 1730Kcal and an average protein supply of 64g capita per day far below the 2500 – 3400Kcal minimum recommended daily intake per day. Nigeria is facing the challenge of unbalanced diet leading to various deficiency symptoms. Also among the 109 countries assessed by Global Food Security Index (GFSI) (2015), Nigeria is 91st with 37.1 score based on indices of affordability, availability, quality and safety. Enough food reserve at household is one of the goals of Nigeria's agricultural development policy which aims at ensuring that there is food security at state and federal government levels to forestall any threat to the level of food security. Since domestic agricultural production has failed to meet up with the increasing demand for food, the government had to spend on importation to feed her teeming population.

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The second sustainable development goal of zero hunger emphasized the great necessity of food security and nutrition, ensuring sustainability of agriculture, ending rural hunger, empowering small scale farmers especially women, ensuring healthy lifestyle by 2030. The Nigerian government is working assiduously to achieve these goals. However, there are hindrances to achieving this Sustainable Developmental Goal 2030 in developing countries like Nigeria. Nigeria is blessed with abundant natural and human resources, but majority of her citizens are living below the poverty line.

Sustainable Developmental Goal 2030

The world leaders present at the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, took another historic step when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisions a present and a future that is economically sustainable, socially inclusive and environmentally resilient. This is expressed in the framing of the 17 SDGs, 169 targets and 230 key performance indicators. Stated simply, the SDGs calls for action to end poverty, safeguard the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by the year 2030

It is expected that by 2030, there will be accessibility of food by all people to end hunger. Particularly, the poor and vulnerable, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round. This the agenda two of the Sustainable Developmental Goal 2030. The achievement of the SDGs is directly dependent on food because, if there is no food, working towards achieving the goals is impossible.

The SDG indicators are crucial as monitoring, operational, and evaluative tools. They are applicable across countries for measuring progress and determining where to channel resources to facilitate progress (Gil et al., 2019; Echendu, 2022). Working towards achieving these goals is country-specific as different countries have different needs and challenges. Paths to attain them will therefore differ among countries because of different physical, social, and economic environments. In the face insecurity in Nigeria, and the effect on food security, a realignment of response strategies and rapid and concerted mitigation efforts have to be put in place by the Nigerian government. Due to insecurity across the country orchestrated by the menace of Boko haram and Fulani herdsmen, farmers are scared from their farm land due to fear of been attacked. This has also affected food production among others. The Sustainable Development Goal to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG2) recognizes the inter linkages among supporting sustainable agriculture, empowering

small farmers, promoting gender equality, ending rural poverty, ensuring healthy lifestyles, tackling climate change, and other issues addressed within the set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Just as Nigeria commenced the ‘Decade of Action’ for the SDGs in January 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 took place, thus challenging the prospects of achieving the SDGs in Nigeria. It would be recalled that Nigeria recorded its first index case on 27 February 2020. Despite measures taken by the federal and state governments to curtail the spread of the pandemic across the country, its adverse impact on socio-economic development as the agricultural sectors were duly affected due to the lockdowns that made farmers to stay at home thereby leading to total food shortage across the country. The Nigerian government is working day and night in ensuring the achievement of Sustainable Developmental Goal 2030. However, there are lots of challenges in the country that are hindrances to sustainable food security in the country.

Sustainable Food Security

Food security is thus recognized as a crucial component of sustainability plans and a key concern of national security. Food security entails producing food that will go round every citizen both in quantity and quality. Nigeria as a nation is yet to achieve this, although since independence every administration made efforts to achieve food security in the country. But her citizen is still plague with hunger, malnutrition and resultant sicknesses and diseases due to non- availability of food and nutrition.

Sustainable food security is an access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life at present plus the ability to provide enough for future generation. According to FAO (2015) food security is access to the food needed by all people to enable them live a healthy life at all times. A country is said to be food secured when there is access to food of acceptable quantity and quality consistent with decent existence at all times for the majority of the population (Idachaba, 2006). World Bank (1986) defined sustainable food security as an access to enough food for an active, healthy life at present as well as ability to provide enough in the future.

According to FAO (2015), the core determinants of food security are availability, accessibility, utilization and stability.

Food Availability:- Food availability plays a visible role in food security. Having enough food in a country is essential but not adequate to ensure that people have satisfactory access to food.

Over the years, population has increased faster than the supply of food thus resulting in food unavailability per person.

Food Accessibility:- To be able to get hold of required food lies on two important conditions: - adequate income or resources and physical access. Economic access depends on one's income, the price of food and the purchasing power of the people. Physical access depends on the availability and quality of infrastructure needed for the production and distribution of food. Lack of economic access to food is as a result of the increase in the rate of poverty.

Food Utilization: - Food utilization is measured by two outcomes indicators which reflect the impact of inadequate food intake and utilization. The first outcome is measured by under-five years of age nutrition level while second measurement is quality of food, health and hygiene. According to FAO measuring the nutritional status of under-five years of age is an effective approximation for the entire population.

Challenges of Sustainable Food Security in Nigeria

Climate change

The effects of climate change in Nigeria has increased incidence of dry spells and off-season rains which have caused variations in planting seasons in a country that depends mainly on rain-fed agriculture. Climate predictions indicate varying conditions in Nigeria, with the dryer regions experiencing more aridity with longer dry spells (Orimoloye et al., 2021) while the humid regions are experiencing much more intense precipitation during the rainy season leading to more flooding events (Adeagbo, 2012).

Flooding

In Nigeria, many communities experience perennial flooding during the rainy season between March and November (Echendu, 2022). The centrality of food to the SDGs makes food security a major determinant of achieving its objectives. Small-scale farmers in Nigeria and globally are mostly affected by flooding. It is note worthy that farmers also constitute the majority of the food-insecure population (Ecker and Kennedy, 2019). Poverty is generally worsening in Nigeria, as seen in the incidence of disease and hunger, decreased life expectancy, and low per-capita income (Ibikunle, 2019). The increasing food and unavailability of food worsened by continual flooding disasters makes food accessibility by the poor difficult.

Population Increase: In Nigeria, demand for food exceeds the supply of food, this is as a result of the rate of growth of population is higher than the growth in agricultural productivity. It is one of the goals of Nigeria's agricultural development policy to secure enough food reserve at household, state and federal

government levels to prevent any threat to the level of food security in the country. The Nigerian government had to spend on importation to feed her teeming population due to failure of domestic agricultural production to meet up with the increasing demand for food.

Agricultural Practices: Nigeria depended so much on agricultural productivity for its revenue until the exploration of oil in 1970s. The oil boom led to the negligence of the non-oil sectors especially the agricultural sector which used to be the major source of revenue for the country. The attention given to agriculture reduced drastically, farming reduced drastically, farmers needs were not attended to and the worst of all was that research and development in the sector slowed down causing a stagnation in food production. As a result, traditional subsistent farming system is prevalent in Nigeria. This system is characterized by use of simple farm tools, small farm holdings, restricted access to credit facilities and low agricultural inputs, inadequate storage facilities, insecure markets for post-harvest products and exploitation of farmers by the middlemen. In terms of technology, Nigeria is still lagging behind when compared to other nations in Europe and Asia. Also there are few extension officers to transfer new technology to the farmers. Funding for agricultural research is still low in Nigeria, which a major hindrance to food security.

Herdsmen

The increasing clashes between farmers and pastoralists have recently become worrisome, especially in the Middle Belt. North Central and Southern part of Nigeria (Abdulrahman, 2017). It is an old age problem, but it has escalated in the last decade, which has assumed a very deadly dimension.

There have been numerous reports of Fulani herdsmen committing crimes in their host communities all over the country. Crimes such as trespassing and grazing farms; gang-rapping of women, kidnapping, armed invasion and massacre of defenceless villagers; and even ethnic cleansing by battalion-strength Fulani militia armed with AK-47 and other sophisticated weapons of war. These reports have come from many states including the following: Plateau, Benue, Nassarawa, Plateau in the North-Central Zone and the Southern part of Kaduna State in the North-West Zone. Reports have also come from Abia, Delta, Enugu, Imo, Kano, Ogun, Ondo and Oyo. The problem has been reported from the South-West and North-Central, as well as the South-East and South-South and the North-West that is, five out of the Nigeria's six geopolitical zones.

T Achieving Food Security for Sustainable Developmental 2030 in Nigeria

Zero hunger is the second Sustainable Development Goal 2030 and it integrates the need to achieve food security and improved nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture, ending rural hunger, empowering small scale farmers especially women, ensuring healthy lifestyle by 2030. For the Nigerian government to achieve these goals, a lot is expected from her.

Ways to tackle flooding are crucial to minimise its impact on food security and achieve more success with the SDGs. The types of flooding problem provide a necessary tailored response specific to locations and types of flooding. The negative impact of flooding on food security, which is the heart of the SDGs, necessitates seeking ways to tackle the flooding menace by the Nigerian government. The type of flooding in Nigeria have been identified as mainly anthropogenic, measures that can help address situation can be put in place by the government in the different locations that experienced or are experiencing flooding in the country.

More efforts should be put into revamping agriculture to its former status before the oil boom in the Nigeria national economy, in terms of its higher contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP). Agricultural advancement in the country is key to food security. Farmer can be encouraged for mass production through diverse means like subsidized farm equipment, seedlings, fertilizers, loan etc which could be regarded as evidence of increased concern for and commitment to food security

Although developed nations are largely responsible for emission of greenhouse gas, the impact of the resultant climate change is more severe in developing countries like Nigeria. While advancement in technology has resulted in increases in supply of food in developed countries, the production of food crops still rely heavily on climate and weather conditions in Nigeria. The continuous clash between herdsmen and farmers in these regions has resulted to several deaths and this situation has worsened food insecurity across Nigeria. Men and women alike are being scared away from their farm land for fear of being attacked by herdsmen.

Corruption

Corruption is a major bane to food security in Nigeria. Money budgeted for agricultural purposes are being siphoned for personal uses by corrupt and unscrupulous leaders. As such, there is a total decline in agricultural researches, provision of fertilizers for farmers, subsidized farm equipment, loan for farmers; all these in a bid to encourage farmers to increase food production in the country. Different projects/schemes have been established by different governments in the

country in order to improve agricultural productivity, but its implementation is hindered by corruption. Until the Nigerian government is able to tackle the menace of corruption in diverse spheres in the country, food security will continue to be elusive thereby putting most her populace in total hunger against the number two agenda of Sustainable Developmental Goal 2030.

CONCLUSION

The issue of food security has drawn a lot of attentions because Nigeria as a developing country is yet to be food secured. The Nigerian government has made food security a top priority in its economic reform agenda. However, a lot of challenges has acted as a hindrance to its success, thereby slowing down the role of food and nutrition in achieving sustainable developmental goal 2030 through food security in Nigeria. Most of the Nigerian populace are hungry and cannot get their daily nutritional needs as against the SDGs 2030 number two zero hunger agenda. Most of the challenges against achieving food security in Nigeria as discussed are Corruption, Herdsmen, Agricultural Practices, Population Increase, Flooding, Climate change, among others. Although the Nigerian government are putting efforts in a bid to curb these menace, but there is a great urgency on a quick solution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher therefore recommends that:

- (1) The Nigerian government should bounce back to reposition the agricultural sector in all manners possible from subsidizing farming equipment and agricultural products for planting to giving out loans to farmers to go beyond subsistence farming to commercial farming for massive food production.
- (2) The government should tackle insecurity problem of Boko Haram insurgency and violent conflicts between herdsmen and crop farmer which is hindering farmers from their agricultural activities so as to foster sustainable developmental goal through food security in Nigeria.
- (3) Agricultural extension services should be made available to farmers so as to learn new technologies from extension officers and also to know the best ways to tackle the issues of pest and plant diseases. These officers should be well paid so that they will be willing to visit rural areas to deliver their services.
- (4) Corrupt leaders who miss appropriate funds meant for agricultural purposes should be prosecuted and dealt with accordingly to serve as a deterrent to potential corrupt leaders.
- (5) The issue of flood and climate change should also be given attention by the government.

- (6) The government should be ready to make fund available for more researches to close the gaps that exist between the genetic potential and actual yields of cultivated crops, proper use of agro-chemicals, development of appropriate technologies for production, processing and storage of food products.
- (7) Nigerian scientist in the field of agriculture especially those in the universities should be fully sponsored to do new researches on how to reposition the agricultural sector for massive yield of food production for food security in the country.

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الملخص العربي

دور الغذاء والتغذية في تحقيق هدف التنمية المستدامة لعام ٢٠٣٠ من خلال الأمن الغذائي في نيجيريا

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في السبعينيات وانعدام الأمن الذي يتغلغل ويغلف المجتمعات الزراعية في جميع أنحاء البلاد يمثل إنتكاسة كبيرة للأمن الغذائي. يزدحم القطاع الزراعي الآن بالفلاحين فقط الذين أعاقهم انعدام الأمن. وهذا على عكس ما حدث عندما كانت الزراعة ذات طابع تجاري كبير وكانت المحاصيل النقدية تُصدَّر بالعملات الأجنبية ؛ وبالتالي جعل الطعام متاحًا لسكان نيجيريا. لذلك توصي الدراسة بضرورة أن تعود الحكومة النيجيرية إلى وضعها الطبيعي لإعادة وضع القطاع الزراعي وكذلك معالجة مشكلة انعدام الأمن التي تعوق المزارعين عن أنشطتهم الزراعية من أجل تعزيز هدف التنمية المستدامة من خلال الأمن الغذائي في نيجيريا.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأمن الغذائي في نيجيريا - التنمية المستدامة - الغذاء والتغذية - الاقتصاد المنزلي.

لا يمكن ان نكون مبالغين عند التأكيد على أهمية الغذاء والتغذية لصحة الأسرة ورفاهيتها في المجتمع النيجيري ؛ فهو خيط الحياة للوجود البشري. اعتمدت نيجيريا على مر السنين على إستيراد كميات كبيرة من المواد الغذائية لتلبية الإحتياجات الغذائية لسكانها المتزايدين. ناقشت هذه الورقة البحثية دور الغذاء والتغذية في تحقيق الهدف التنموي المستدام ٢٠٣٠ من خلال الأمن الغذائي في نيجيريا. لقد أصبح هذا ضروريًا لأنه لا يمكن أن تحدث أي تنمية ذات مغزى في بلد حيث مواطنوها غير أصحاء بسبب نقص الغذاء. يمكن أن تؤدي كفاية إنتاج الغذاء في نيجيريا إلى نمو اقتصادي غير مسبوق ، مما سيساعد في تحقيق الهدف الإنمائي المتمثل في القضاء على الجوع المدقع في نيجيريا. وقد لوحظ أن خسارة القطاع الزراعي بسبب الطفرة النفطية