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**TOWARDS SUSTANIABLE INFORMATION FOR HOUSEHOLDS' FOOD SECURITY
IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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Abstract

Food security is one of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is widely considered a useful measure for evaluating the progress of a country in terms of wellbeing. Despite, various concern by governments all over the world on ensuring that every household can at least provide three square meals per day, food insecurity continues to be a major development problem across the globe, undermining people's health, productivity, and often their very survival. Evidence suggests that Nigerians food production is increasing at less than 2.0% while population growth rate is estimated to be 2.5% per annum. The suggested disparity indicates that low rate of food production and high rate of population growth will generate high rate of food demand, thereby causing food Demand-Supply gap which can give rise to food insecurity. Thus the study analyzed household food security in Kaduna state using consumption surveys containing subjective (qualitative) data. The study revealed that on average, only 14 percent of the households were food secured. Hence, 47 percent of the households were found to be food insecure without hunger and 36 percent were food insecure with hunger. Furthermore, the findings also showed that at least 38 percent of the household live below one hundred dollar (\$100), 52 percent are fairly living on a hundred dollar (\$100) while only 10 percent live above one hundred dollars margin. Income level of households was found to be a factor that will provide them with greater food adequacy. Some actions to be taken by librarians to ensure the provision of sustainable information for households were highlighted. Recommendations based on policies were also proffered to improve upon the food security and hygiene of households.

Keywords: Sustainable Information, Households', Food Security, Income Level, Kaduna State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Food security as posited by Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) is when all people at all times have access to safe and nutritious food needed to maintain a healthy and active life. Thus, food security involves not only food production issues but also aspects of distribution, marketing and storage (FAO, 1995).

Food security is one of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals and is widely considered as important measure for evaluating the progress of a country in terms of wellbeing (Vasco, 2007). Despite, various concern by governments all over the world on ensuring that every household can at least provide three square meals for their family, food insecurity continues to be a major development problem across the globe, undermining people's health, productivity, and often their very survival (Smith and Subandoro, 2007). Global hunger is severe, as nearly 30 per cent of the world's population is currently suffering from one or more forms of malnutrition, including inadequate caloric consumption, protein deficiency, poor dietary quality, and inadequate concentrations of protein and micronutrients (Basudeb, Acharya, and Davis, 2007). Worldwide, approximately 840 million people are undernourished or chronically food insecure, and as many as 2.8 million children and 300,000 women die needlessly every year because of malnutrition in developing countries. (Basudeb et al, 2007). The situation is particularly worrying in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. While lack of sustained economic growth is an important determinant of hunger, the persistence of hunger also feeds back to limit economic growth. Basudeb, Brinda and Meenakshi (2007), provide empirical evidences which point to the negative impact of hunger and malnutrition on labour productivity, health, and education, which ultimately leads to lower levels of overall economic growth. Hunger is thus as much a cause as an effect of poverty. These studies suggest that hunger has a direct effect on

poverty and good nutrition is an investment in human capital that raises output as well as the returns on investments in education and health care. Taken together, these findings provide powerful evidence that public spending in reducing hunger is an investment with high returns and should constitute a top priority for developing countries.

Since the World Food Conference (WFC) of 1974, food security paradigms have shifted from the global and national level to the household and individual level.

Measuring food insecurity at the individual/household level rather than the national level differs from the more traditional approach of identifying food insecurity as the inadequacy of aggregate supply of and accessibility to food.

According to Webb et al, (2006) as cited by Mauro (2007) argued that Measuring and assessing food insecurity hinged on two contending views; objective-quantitative methods and subjective qualitative techniques for the measurement of food insecurity. However, more recently, these two methods have been increasingly viewed as complementary, and it has become evident that a suite of indicators is necessary to capture the multifaceted nature of food security. Towards this end, the use of household expenditure and consumption surveys containing subjective information on household potentially provides a valuable workbench for this study.

The food security status of Nigeria is seen from the fact that small scale farmers are the major producers of the food consumed in the country and these farmers have inadequate capacity to produce enough for the country's need (IFPRI, 2009). The Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with States and Local Governments as well as external agencies such as World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and African Development Bank (ADB) have initiated several programmes and projects like Agricultural Development Project (ADP), National Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS), National Fadama Development

Programme (NFDP) and Root and Tubers Expansion Programmes (RTEP) in order to assist farmers by providing them with an enabling environment for their production activities. By sponsoring these programmes and projects, government and donor agencies aimed to achieve food security by ensuring that all the residents in the country have physical and economic access to sufficient food at all times. Apart from the food sufficiency and security, other expected outcomes in all the programmes and projects include increased employment opportunity, reduced post-harvest losses, improved standard of living, improved quality of life and improved economic status of the farmers and rural dwellers in Nigeria (Ingawa, 2004). This study therefore was carried out to examine the state of household food security in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

INFORMATION

Information can be seen as anything that causes some behavioural changes when assimilated by an individual. Aguolu (1984) asserted that information can increase our awareness and help us educate our people, accelerate progress and provide the source data required for the solution of our increasingly complex economic, social and scientific problems.

SUSTAINABLE INFORMATION

Sustainable information in this study is referred to the provision of continuous access to the right information for households to enable them make right choices within their limited resources on the kind of food they purchase, containing the right amount of dietary nutrition to help keep every member of the household healthy.

In line with the United Nations (UN) third Sustainable Development Goal to be achieved by year 2030, “in ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” therefore libraries and information centres have been charged to provide public access to health and wellness information that will help individuals and households stay healthy.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Kaduna State, located in the Northern Guinea Savannah ecological zone. The state is located between latitude 9°N and 12°N and longitude 6°E and 9°E of the prime meridian. The state occupies an area of about 48,473.2 square kilometers (FDS, 2006). It has a population of 6,066,562 people (NBS, 2007). The climate varies from the north to the southern part of the state.

A simple random sampling technique was adopted for this study which allowed fifty (50) households to be selected purposively for this study. The respondents of this study basically constituted residents of Sabon-Gari Local Government Area this is because it comprises a mixed settlement in terms of religion and educational exposure. The data required for this study were obtained from the selected households using structured interview questionnaire. The design of the instrument was guided by the specific objectives of the study. The data was collected by the researcher with the help of five (5) trained assistants who can speak the local dialect. The data collected constituted basically perceptions on food security and per capita income of households.

ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUE

Data collected for the purpose of this study was analyzed using simple frequency and percentage tables. The table consisted of the variables, frequencies corresponding to the variables, percentages and cumulative percentages, which helped in the descriptive analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

PERCEPTION ON FOOD SECURITY;

Table 1 below contained information on the multiple questions reflecting varying degrees of food insufficiency that were asked, and at least to a certain extent the level of food insecurity through individuals' perceptions of their food situation.

As it is in the interest of this paper to reveal whether households were food secured, food insecure without hunger, or food insecure with hunger. Therefore Table 1 above reveals the following **‘Worried food would run out’** 50 percent of the household were food insecure with hunger, 36 percent were food insecure without hunger while 8 percent were food secured. Similarly, for **‘Food bought did not last’**; 36 percent were food insecure with hunger, 44 percent were food insecure without hunger while 14 percent were food secured. A small percentage of households- 16 percent could be classified as food secured in the case of **‘Respondent not eat balanced meals’**, hence, 30 percent and 50 percent were food insecure with hunger and food insecure without hunger respectively. Also, for **‘Child fed few on low-cost foods’**, 44 percent of the household were food insecure with hunger, 38 percent were food insecure without hunger while 12 percent were food secured.

On **‘Child not fed with balanced meals’**, 56 percent of the household were food insecure with hunger, 24 percent were food insecure without hunger and 12 percent were food secured. As for **‘Adult cut/skip meals’** 20 percent of the household were food insecure with hunger, 54 percent were food insecure without hunger while 16 percent were food secured. Also for **‘Respondent eats less than should’** only 18 percent of the households were food secured; 32 percent and 44 percent were food insecure with hunger and food insecure without hunger respectively. For **‘Child not eating enough’** 14 percent of the households were found to be food secured; 50 percent were food insecure without hunger and 30 percent were food insecure with hunger.

For **‘Respondent lost weight’** the analysis revealed that approximately, 18 percent of the households were food secured, 46 percent were food insecure without hunger and 34 percent were food insecure with hunger. For **‘Child meal size cut’** it was also found that the

percentages of households that were food secured, food insecure without hunger and food insecure with hunger were 14 percent, 52 percent and 24 percent respectively.

Table 1: Respondents' Perception of Food Security

The Core Food Security Modules	Frequencies	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
Worried food would run out			
Often true	25	50	50
Sometimes true	18	36	86
Never true	4	8	94
Refused	3	6	100
Food bought did not last			
Often true	18	36	36
Sometimes true	22	44	80
Never true	7	14	94
Refused	3	6	100
Respondent not eat balanced meals			
Often true	15	30	30
Sometimes true	25	50	80
Never true	8	16	96
Refused	2	4	100
Child fed few time on low-cost foods			
Often true	28	56	56
Sometimes true	12	24	80
Never true	6	12	92
Refused	4	8	100
Adult cut/skip meals			
Almost every month	10	20	20
Some months but not every month	27	54	74
Or in only 1 or 2 months	8	16	90
none	5	10	100
Child not fed with balanced meals			
Almost every month	18	36	36
Some months but not every month	17	34	70
Or in only 1 or 2 months	12	24	94
None	3	6	100
Respondent eat less than should			
Often true	16	32	32
Sometimes true	22	44	76
Never true	9	18	94
Refused	3	6	100
Child not eating enough			
Often true	15	30	30

Sometimes true	25	50	80
Never true	7	14	98
Refused	3	6	100
Respondent lost weight			
Often true	17	34	34
Sometimes true	23	46	80
Never true	9	18	98
Refused	1	2	100
Child meal size cut			
Often true	12	24	24
Sometimes true	26	52	76
Never true	7	14	90
Refused	5	10	100
Adult not eat for whole day			
Almost every month	6	12	12
Some months but not every month	18	36	48
Or in only 1 or 2 months	16	32	80
None	10	20	100
Child hungry			
Often true	13	26	26
Sometimes true	23	46	72
Never true	10	20	92
Refused	4	8	100
Child skipped meal			
Almost every month	19	38	38
Some months but not every month	24	48	86
Or in only 1 or 2 months	6	12	98
None	1	2	100
Child not eat for whole day			
Often true	14	28	28
Sometimes true	27	54	82
Never true	7	14	96
Refused	2	4	100

The findings for ‘**Adult not eats for whole**’ day, showed that 20 percent of the households were food secured. However, 68 percent of the households were food in secured without hunger and only 12 percent were food insecure with hunger. In the case of ‘**Child hungry**’ the figures

showed that 46 percent of the households were food insecure without hunger, 26 percent were food insecure with hunger while only 20 percent were food secured.

The findings for ‘**Child skipped meal**’ indicated that about 48 percent were food insecure without hunger, 38 percent were food insecure with hunger and then only 2 percent were food secured. However, for ‘**Child not eats for whole day**’ the findings were 14 percent, 54 percent and 28 percent for food secured, food insecure without hunger and food insecure with hunger respectively.

Based on households’ responses to these questions, subjective food adequacy/inadequacy indicators provides an insight to comment on the overall mean vulnerability and/or relative dimension of food insecurity.

OVERALL MEAN FOOD INSECURITY

Table 2: Overall Mean Food Insecurity

Dimension of food Insecurity	Percentage (%)
Food Secured	14
Food Insecured without Hunger	47
Food Insecured with Hunger	33
Non Response	6
Total	100

Source: Researcher’s own calculations. Note percentage here represents the mean of each corresponding dimension of food insecurity

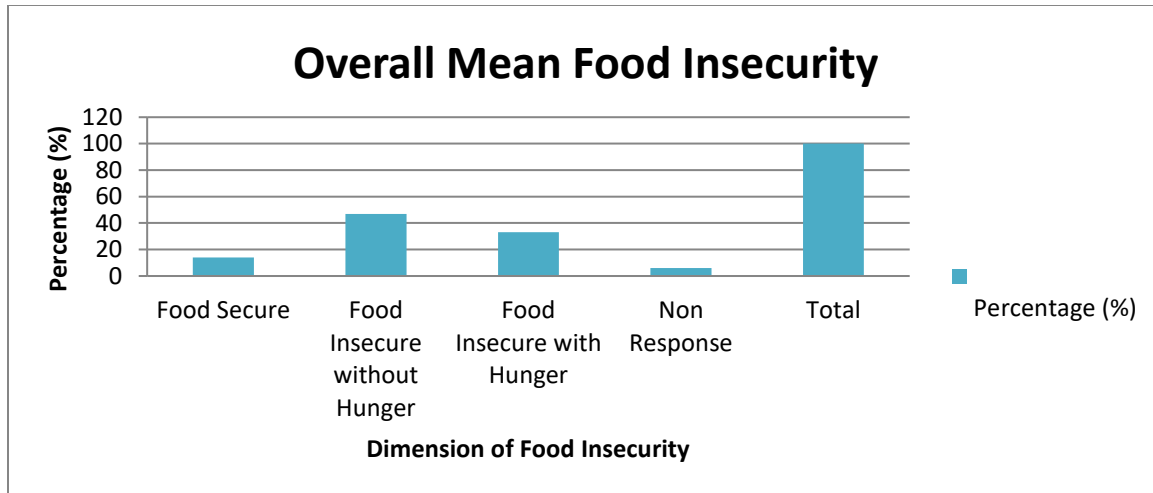


Fig1: Overall Mean Food Insecurity.

The table2 and figure1 above reveals that only 14 percent of the household are food secured. However, 47 percent of the households were found to be food insecure without hunger and 33 percent may be classified as food insecure with hunger. Though, the major weakness of this method is that the food insecurity index constructed in this way was designed to portray household rather than individual food insecurity.

LEVELS OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Table 3: Levels of Household Income

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
N20000 – N30000	8	16	16
N30001 – N40000	11	22	38
N40001 – N50000	26	52	90
N50001 and above	5	10	100

Table 3 reveals the level of income of households sampled. The average minimum wage of workers in Nigeria is Eighteen thousand Naira (N18, 000) but in this study it was taken to be that the minimum wage a worker sampled should get was twenty thousand Naira (N20, 000). This was done to enable the researcher correspond the average earnings of respondents to the dollars with the \$1 equaling N450. Hence the analysis revealed that 38 percent of the respondents

sampled live below \$100 margin, 52 percent of the households live slightly within \$100 margin, and only 10 percent of the households were comfortably living above the \$100 margin.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This paper carefully looked at the household food security in Kaduna state. It used the household consumption survey to gather data which helped in the analysis and determination of the level of food security. Below is the summary of findings from the analysis of data collected:

- The paper reveals that some households were not able to provide basic food needs due to financial constraints.
- Only 14 percent of the household sampled were food secured.
- 47 percent of the households were food insecure without hunger.
- 33 percent of the households sampled were food insecure with hunger.
- The findings also showed that at least 38 percent of the household live below one hundred dollar (\$100), 52 percent are fairly living on a hundred dollar while only 10 percent live above one hundred dollars margin.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES IN THE PROVISION OF SUSTAINABLE INFORMATION FOR HOUSE HOLD FOOD SECURITY

According to IFLA the main objectives of libraries and information centres in achieving the third Sustainable development goals is to provide public access to health and wellness information to help individuals and households stay healthy. To achieve this however, libraries and information centres have to ensure that the following actions are taken:

- Raising awareness on the various issues spelt out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages

- Providing a platforms for sharing relevant information in appropriate language and formats on the issues of food security, food and nutrition and other dietary issues
- Establishment of strong library programmes for residence and households on food security issues
- Hosting local forums from time to time where the youths and locals can talk through problems, such as community health,
- Partnering with other agencies in promoting changes needed to meet to tackle issues relating to food security
- Providing mobile library services that will help improve readership of issues relation to food security
- Liaising with mobile app developers to help develop apps relating to food security and dietary requirements for healthy living.

CONCLUSION

The issue of food security can never be said to be over emphasized. Food security exists when all people have access to sufficient amounts of safe, nutritious and affordable food to provide the foundation for active and healthy lives. However, the revealed that per capita income was one of the major determinants of food security among households sampled. And this was evident because whenever there was a fluctuation in the rate of Dollar to Naira at the Forex market everything was affected including food commodities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having found the presence of food insecurity, the following recommendations are therefore suggested to manage threats related to the availability, access, and utilization of food, which constitute the core of food security;

Food Availability: Measures for stabilizing food availability should aim at ensuring the supply of nutritionally adequate food. This stability can be achieved through local production; domestic food stocks changes and concessional food imports (where necessary). Measures for improving domestic production include investments in irrigation, research into drought/pest resistant varieties and encouraging farm level transfer of new technologies.

Food Access: Measures for managing access to food aim at ensuring that households are able to meet food consumption needs should be put in place. This requires measures that stabilize households' purchasing power/consumption ability through assets management and by stabilizing income flows and/or stabilizing food prices.

Food Utilization: Risk management measures related to proper food utilization which evolve around protecting health status of individuals should be maintained. The measures are concerned with improving nutrition and healthcare practices, health service delivery, ensuring access to safe water and sanitation, but also with protection of food quality and safety. Promotions of good nutritional practices, including safe food handling and the awareness of balanced diets, together with simple information on how to avoid or treat basic diseases like diarrhea, typhoid etc, all assist in maintaining individual health.

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