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Food, Health and the Economic Depression in Contemporary Nigeria (1979-2009)

[1]Armstrong Pankyes Mangvwat and [2]Bersheba Monday Mangvwat
[1]Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria
[2]Department of Science and Technology Education, Faculty of Education, University of Jos, Nigeria

Abstract: The study presents an overview of what is food, the various types and its relevance to developing a healthy life. There are cultural variations of what food is globally. Access to food and nutrition has declined over the years, causing a reciprocal decline as well in the health status of Nigerians. A relationship between food and health is explained and established. A theoretical perspective that is conflictual is elaborated. The Nigerian context of food, health and a depressed economy is explained; the economic depression emerged as a result of meeting the demands of the IMF/World Bank loan to develop a structural Adjustment Programme. This plunged a lot of Nigerians into poverty as subsidies were removed from all forms of social services. With the high rate of poverty and unemployment, the necessities invented to survive includes living a promiscuous life to gain food, health, employment and other material acquisition. This has increased the HIV/AIDS prevalence in the country. AIDS was propagated deeply into the blood of the Nigerian society in the early 1980's during the window period. The early 1980's was met with harsh economic realities in Nigeria; a lot of sexual gratification expressed itself among the youth in a bid to overcome poverty and harsh conditions of living. This birthed AIDS in Nigeria in 1986. Secondary data from the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) was obtained to show the growing prevalence of HIV/AIDS in relation to the economic depression. This has established a relationship between SAP and HIV/AIDS and the survival mechanism of the youth that are the bulk of the labour force that propels Nigeria's economic development. Lastly, the study ends with a commercial dimension of exports and imports of food, citing some political and economic dimensions of the food trade. The study concludes with cautioning the government on accepting or limiting their romance with neo-liberal policies that further exacerbate or aggravate the situation of food, health and economic depression in Nigeria.

Key words: Food, health, economic depression, seed based plant, HIV/AFDA, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Food is any substance composed of carbohydrates, fats, fiber, protein, vitamins and water that is consumed either by eating or drinking by an animal or humans for nutrition and pleasure while plants consume food through the process of photosynthesis, the method for animals vary depending on whether they are mammals, aquatic animals, avarian or unicellular organisms.

Food items may be sourced from plants, animals or other categories such as fungus or fermented products like alcohol. Although, many human cultures sought food items through hunting and gathering, today most cultures use farming, ranching, fishing, hunting, foraging and other methods of a local nature to suit their need.

Most cultures have a recognizable cuisine, a specific set of cooking traditions, preferences and practices, the study of which is known as gastronomy. Many cultures have diversified their foods by means of preparation, cooking methods and manufacturing. This also includes a complex food trade which helps the cultures to economically survive by way of food not just by consumption.

Many traditions and cultures study the dietary analysis of food habits and its health implications as well. Humans as omnivores are affected by religion and social constructs of what is morally edible or not. As such we now have humans that consume only vegetables known as vegetarians; this is one of such variations. Food safety is also concerned with food borne illness claiming many lives annually. In many languages, food is often used metaphorically or figuratively as in food for thought.

As mentioned, earlier almost all foods are plant or animal by origin, though exceptions exist not coming as plant or animal sources but as plant or animal sources but as various edible fungi such as mushroom fungi and

Corresponding Author: Armstrong Pankyes Mangvwat, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria

ambient bacteria are used in the preparation of fermented and prickled foods such as leavened bread, alcoholic drinks, cheese pickles and yoghurt. Many cultures eat seaweed, a protest or blue-green algae (cyan bacteria) such as Spirulina (Aguilera and Stanley, 1999). Other additives include salts which flavors or preserves food, baking powder used in food preparation. Both of those are inorganic substances as well as water, an important part of the human diet.

Many plants are eaten as food. Asado Argentina (2007) states that there are 2,000 plant species which are cultivated for food and many have several distinct cultivars. Seeds of plants are consumed by animals particularly humans because of their nutritional value as they are needed for human growth and development. Most foods consumed by humans are seed based plants such as cereal (such as maize, wheat and rice), legumes (such as beans, peas and lentils) and nuts. Other plants are tubers highly rich in starch yam; cassava and cocoa-yam are inclusive. Oil seeds are plants pressed to produce rich oils such as sunflower, rapeseed (including canola oil) and sesame (Ridi-hausa).

One of the earliest food recipes made from ground chickpeas is called hummus can be traced to Ancient Egypt (Campell, 1998). Fruits are the ripened ovaries of plants including the seeds within. Many plants have evolved fruits that are attractive as a food source to animals. Fruits are significant source of food in plenty cultures. Some botanical fruits such as tomatoes, pepper, onions, eggplants (Guata-hausa) spinach are eaten as vegetables.

Vegetables are another type of plant that is commonly eaten as food. They could be vegetables such as carrots, potatoes; leaf vegetables (such as spinach, cabbage, lettuce) stem vegetables such as bamboo shoots and asparagus and inflorescence vegetables (such as globe artichokes and broccoli). Many spices and herbs are highly flavorful vegetables (Carpenter and Finley, 2005).

Animals are used as food directly as by-products. Meat is food taken directly from the animals' organs or muscle while food like, milk, cheese, butter are by-products from animals. Birds and other animals lay eggs which are often eaten. Bees produce honey a popular sweetener in many cultures. Some cultures consume blood, some in the form of blood sausage, as a thickener for sauces, a cured salted form for times of food scarcity and according to Davidson and Jaine (2006) others use blood in stews such as civet.

There exist a relationship between food consumption and the health of humans. A balance diet is a meal constituting all food parts and ingredient so that none is lacking in a meal as it helps maintain growth, development and maintaining a healthy body as well as boosting the immunity of the human body. Health is generally defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity according to the World Health Organization in 1948 (Haralambos and Holborn, 2005). This is preamble to the constitution of the World Health Constitution of the Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22nd July 1946 by the representatives of 61 states. This definition has not been amended since 1948.

The Ottawa charter for health promotion by the WHO in 1986 said health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capabilities. So overall health is achieved through a combination of physical, mental, emotional and social well-being.

Physical fitness refers to body health and is a product of regular exercise, proper diet and nutrition and proper rest for physical recovery. A strong indicator of physical health of a people or population is its average height or weight which generally increases with improved nutrition and health care. This is also influenced by the quality of life and standard of living.

Mental health describes either a level of cognitive or emotional well being or an absence of a mental disorder. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities can cope with normal stresses of life can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make contributions to his or her community (WHO, 2005). Despite official definitions, the concepts of mental health and the question of whether or not an individual is mentally well, remains a subjective assessment.

Health and illness is aggravated or affected by some factors such as access to health care services and delivery, gender, race, religion, poverty and socio-economic class, social and physical environments (Haralambos and Holborn, 2005; Giddens, 2004).

While the health status of most people is maintained through social activities, environmental and personal hygiene, stress management, access to resources and nutrition. This clearly tells us that the heath of a person is determined by the type of food he/she has access to. Their development and growth is affected, intellectually they are retarded and their immune systems are fragile and have collapsed.

According Mangvwat (2004) nutrition is the basic foundation of health. The failure of food production, the

distortions of the foundation for a healthy population is very bleak and is getting worse in Nigeria with the past economic crisis and the advent of the current global financial melt down. The overall implication is that without good nutrition or food, there can be no good health and without good health, there will be limited or no economic development. No amount of increased discipline or regimentation can make Nigerians productive when they are not healthy. The depressed economy has seriously depressed people so much so that the WHO's definition of Health is far fetched from its meaning.

CONFLICT THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This statement explains that there is a clash of interest between classes or nations for scarce resources. This relation of production explains that there are social groups or classes in society that have different interests. These social arrangements tend to benefit some groups at the expense of others. The existence of different interests creates the potential for conflict. The different groups pursuing their respective interests are likely to clash and produce some degree of instability in the society.

In this case, it is an interest of scarce economic resources between the north and south or the core and periphery. This clash of interests produces some instability in the economy as well as other social institutions of the Nigerian state.

The quest for material possession or capital led the mercantile or colonialist to the shores of Nigeria where they acquired natural resources, practical commercial agriculture which they exported and made money at the expense and labour of Nigeria.

In 1960, Nigeria acquired its independence politically from Britain but economic independence was not totally granted. The resources in Nigeria kept the metropolitan bourgeoisie in a relational arrangement of production for their own interest.

Though, few Nigerians have benefited from this relationship, the greater part of the nation suffers. In order to revamp the economy of Nigeria, the North through the IMF and World Bank offered the nation loans with conditions attached that made Nigeria's economy dependent and rearranged the structure of the society. These neo-liberal agents of restructure are imperialists by nature as such they use politics and economics to continue to exploit and depress the economy of Nigeria.

The Structural Adjustment Programme has devalued the currency and since its inception the economy of Nigeria up till date has been unstable, hazy and blurred. This has had a direct or indirect effect on the quality of live of all and sundry in the country. It has been able to set up a political elite that conspires with the policies of finance capital to further depress the economy hence, the cost, standard and quality of living for most people has degenerated. It is bad that the United Nations has observed that the average Nigerian lives below the average of one dollar daily. This means that most Nigerians live in abject poverty and cannot afford good food which determines their health status. This, according to Kwanashie (1987) means that the economic situation on the quality of lives of Nigerians is further being aggravated. Mangvwat (2004) concurs that this grossly compromises the health of Nigerians lives in the rural areas where poverty and development is very low. This means a greater segment of this nations' population has serious issues with poverty, health and food.

THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

The present economic crises in Nigeria and its persistence has had cumulative effects that have militated against health conditions due to food deficiencies over the years to date. This has raised the question of what is fundamentally wrong with it. Nigeria is endowed with a lot of domestic resources both human and natural. The economy is on the brink of collapse, an overwhelming majority of peoples poverty and suffering is intensifying.

About five decades ago, Nigeria was able to produce substantial amount of food to feed itself. Now, it has to import massive amounts despite the potential for global food production inherent in Nigeria. Unemployment, increased poverty and hunger, seem to be the fate of most Nigerians and the conditions which successive generations may face if the economy does not change.

From a reflection the past, Nigerians have for centuries been engaged in the resourceful, relentless and fruitful efforts as hunters, farmers, artisans, fishermen, herders, merchants among others using the bounty which nature has endowed the country, to produce, sustain and develop themselves. The period before the Atlantic slave trade was marked with auto-centric development. Though, the various polities became Nigeria they were at different levels of socio-economic and technological development.

The dynamics of their economics were generally located within them. The mining, smelting and working of metals; the manufacture of hoes, cutlasses and other implements, arable and pastoral agriculture, the production of looms and the making of textiles were all parts of economies which were generally self sustaining and self propelling (Abba, 1985).

As already pointed out, imperialism penetrated and subordinated these to its own needs to the detriment of the local needs of these economies. But despite almost

500 years plunder of the human, land, minerals, water, energy and other resources that were drained away to the Americas and Europe, Nigeria still has sufficient resources to promote economic development and good living conditions for Nigerians. Nigeria is fortunate to have enough resource potential, human and material to lay a solid foundation for a socio-economic revolution in Nigeria. From the 1970s to date, the ruling classes in Nigeria accumulated wealth through importing foreign food products, machinery, fertilizer, chemicals, agricultural equipment and mills. This high rate of wealth accumulation by middle men from imports and distribution of these items have encouraged those in control of governments to sustain this negative process.

The beginning of the collapse of the world oil market as both demand for and the price of oil plummeted in the late 1970's and in the 1980's was rather unanticipated by the Nigerian government. The foreign reserve was not enough to offset the loans the nation acquired from importation. Very importantly, the dwindling foreign exchange earning capacity resulted in the build up of the backlog of trade arreas as the country could no longer finance its earlier forms of imports from its current foreign exchange earnings.

In addition, the country began to experience considerable difficulty in meeting the requirements for its short and medium term external loans.

Thus, during the Shagari era, it was clear that there was a need for intervention to arrest the situation. Attempts at identifying the intervention mechanisms that would revamp the economy onto the path of economic recovery, growth and development started.

The concept and strategy of a structural adjustment programme designed to facilitate the rejuvenation of the economy and to reduce the vulnerability of the country's mono-cultural nature of its economy were deliberated during the Shagari's administration. A major policy recommendation of the National Economic Council (NEC) expert report on the state of the economy, February 1983 was the necessity to restructure the economic base and system of the Nigerian economy to correct external imbalance, domestic inflation and unemployment and the anomalous import content of the productive as well as the construction activities of the nation.

The lingering inability of the Shagari administration to meet the payments for recurrent imports, capital and interest payments on short and medium term loans necessitated the dialogue between the country and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan. The Buhari administration continued this dialogue when it took over power in December 1983. Meanwhile a belt tightening policy (through fiscal and monetary measures) was adopted to check the external imbalance, internal and external indebtedness and the concomitant problems of an economy in stagnation, inflation and depression. The debate on IMF loan was thrown open to the public during the Babangida regime and was unanimously rejected by the Nigerian public because of the stringent conditions attached to the loan. The continued inability of finance external trade due to the continued worsening of the oil market coupled with the insistence of the external creditors forced the country to go back to the World Bank for help. Just like the IMF, the World Bank loan was accompanied by its own conditions. The conditions or requirements broadly stated were in terms of the Structural Adjustment Program for the recipient country; Nigeria. It is believed the World Bank inspired the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP).

The major aspect of the World Bank Structural Adjustment Program included the control of certain governmental parastatals and corporation, trade liberation, reduction in government expenditure and the removal of certain commodity price subsidization. The major philosophy informing these elements of the Structural Adjustment Program is the inherent efficiency of the price system over and above government control in resource allocation (Odama, 1987).

The core of the IMF/World Bank initiated Structural Adjustment Program was the policy to allow the market forces of demand and supply to determine the rate at which the Naira was exchanged with other foreign currencies. It was hoped that this would lead to a determination of a realistic value of the naira vis-à-vis the foreign currencies and in addition, ensure a more optimal use and allocation of foreign exchange to the various sectors of the economy than could be achieved through the import licensing policy.

Furthermore, the policy of a market determined exchange rate for the naira was expected to improve the external balance by curtailing imports and boosting exports as well as enhancing the inflow of foreign capital and investments amongst other (Kwanashie, 1987; Ojowu, 1987; Attah, 1987).

The Structural Adjustment Program came into being in the Nigerian economy in July 1986 and was expected to be operated for two years, terminating in June 1988.

NIGERIAN STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME (SAP)

In the 1980's conditional lending for Structural Adjustment Programmes in developing countries moved IMF beyond its role of macroeconomic crisis management. The IMF supported adjustment programmes have often

been flawed by a lack of distributional analysis and by poor sequencing of reforms, notably premature financial liberalization. As a result, they have caused avoidable hardship. In addition, the attempt to give aid as part of the reform programme leads to avoidable reductions in post stabilization growth. An important role for IMF in post stabilization environment is to provide credible signals to private investors. The funds instrument for concessional lending to income countries is its Extended Structural Adjustment Facility ESAF (Collier and Gunning, 1999).

Riddell (1992) however, states that the operations of the World Bank and the IMF have profound impacts upon the lives of Nigerians; these extend beyond financial issues, geo-politics, agriculture, health, education and the political economy. The IMF imposed conditionalities to their loans and aid which are integral elements of Structural Adjustment Programmes have affected not only the lives of Nigerians but the nature of events and social reality in the country (Riddell, 1992).

Riddell further states that although the specifics of SAP differ, four basic elements are always present: currency devaluation, the removal or reduction of the state from the working of the economy thereby deregulating the economy, the elimination of subsidies in an attempt to reduce public expenditures and trade liberalization Such prerequisites are intended to lead to the adjustment of malfunctioning economies in order that they become viable components of a global system.

However, at the same time, the country's structures are altered significantly in certain fundamental ways which involve the organization of the state, the character of the environment, the supply of food, the meaning of development, urban-rural interaction and distinctly different future prospects for the several social institutions that make up Nigeria.

Due and Gladwim (1991) have stressed that SAP initiated by the IMF and World Bank and supported by donors have stimulated many tropical African economies through an infusion of foreign exchange, increased agricultural prices, devaluation of overvalued currencies, improved marketing policies, trade liberalization and increased competition from the private sector.

There are arguments that underlying SAP prescriptionare neoclassical assumptions that markets work and are generally competitive. Structural adjustment thus relies on more intensive use of the private sector through divestiture of non-strategic public enterprise, parastatals and requires the removal of exchange rate and other biases against export or tradable and the switching of resources from the production of non-tradable to tradable. It also demands the reduction of budget and balance of payments deficits through fiscal and monetary measures, as well as a public service that is efficient, reliable with transparent accounting of public funds. Due and Gladwim (1991), further point out that adjustment means change and change means cost as well as benefits, losers as well as winners. But who will be the winners and losers? The people who use imported goods, urban elite, industrial producers, agricultural implement users, truckers and losers unless domestic prices increase correspondingly because devaluation increases the cost of imported inputs. If devaluation is coupled with an increase in agricultural producer prices, farmers should benefit and urban consumers lose.

This should stimulate agricultural production in the long run, encourage import substitution of domestic goods in production and diversify exports. But this is not the practice. In theory, SAP program should benefit agricultural producers because much emphasis is placed on renewing agricultural production and aligning farm gate prices with world prices. But SAP reforms have worsened the agricultural production and income of farmers by being to macro economic in scope and ignoring the reality of life at the village and household levels.

The rural food producers are supposed to gain from an urban-rural redistribution of income under SAP but this is not the case the importers and exporters do. These conditions have affected food production, cost of food with directly or indirectly impact on the health seeking pattern of Nigerians through access to food and quality of good live. There is a relationship between the quantity and quality of food consumed and the health status of individuals, the best quality of food consumed is reflected in the health of an individual.

SAP destroyed the structure of all the social institutions in Nigeria which included health, education, agriculture and the economy. Prior to its implementation, food was affordable; Nigerians had three meals daily and health services were relatively free. SAP caused these structures to collapse and paved way for more of the private sector to take over the economy and other sectors in the country.

In 1999, with the return to democracy Obasanjo introduced the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) with a view to revamping and reforming the economy and other institutions in the country.

That policy as designed by the National Planning Commission of Nigeria, failed to realize that the programme was the same neo-liberal programme coined and propagated by the same agents of imperialism. With the objective of making the Nigerian economy still dependent on the West a such there is little or no

economic independence for Nigeria as the programme gave a lot of room for partnership between the public and private sectors to provide social services and the privatization of public services which it was hoped would bring a major revolution to the nation. But as of today, this programme has not been able to over haul the power and energy sector which is necessary for the economy to grow.

The political elite have just acquired public property but have not been able to reform them. The privatization of NITEL, NEPA and other government agencies has not revamped or boosted the sector as anticipated, rather the private sector is growing and taking over the economy and will soon get the nation to a point where deregulation and liberalization will take over the economy of the nation. Such neo-liberal policies, private owners are greed.

Oriented and targeted at the surpluses they can make or get from the majority of Nigerians. The health sector adopted the public private partnership too; this also limits the access to health services because the National Health Insurance Scheme, its key instrument as to who can access its services.

The current global economic depression is caused by the top world economies deregulating and liberalizing their economies with no government regulations on economic activities today a lot are suffering for it. This is the product of the neo-liberal policies.

The overall effect of this depression of the food and health of most Nigerians is malnutrition and lack of human and social development because if the health of individuals has collapsed then economic and national development will be commensurate in its output such that famine and hunger will invariably be the order of the day. Expectedly, this will lead to an increase in the mortality rates of the nation.

SAP AND AIDS

Infections diseases kill over 10 million people each year, >90% of whom are in the developing world. The leading causes of illness and death in Africa, Asia and South-America-regions that accounts for four-fifths of the world's population are HIV/AIDS, respiratory infections, malaria and tuberculosis (Hoen, 2003). HIV/AIDS was first diagnosed in Nigeria in 1986 when the disease was already a problem in East Africa, Uganda and Kenya.

The scourge of HIV/AIDS is associated with poverty; in fact some scholars attribute its prevalence to poverty (World Bank, 1996). The economic crisis that has lingered in Nigeria since the late 1970s to date has left a lot of Nigerians particularly the youth unemployed. The neo-liberal policies of the IMF/World Bank programme of economic stabilization, structural adjustment and liberalization had conditions attached to it such as privatization of public enterprises and utilities, deregulation of social services (which includes the removal of government subsidies on health, education, housing, agriculture amongst others), devaluation of national currency, trade liberalization, debt peonage and debt servicing and right sizing of workers. Under these certain conditions can help alleviate poverty.

Commitment to transparency, accountability and a strong stance against corruption are necessary ingredients for poverty alleviation. Resources saved can be invested in social sectors (Education, health) and the provision of basic infrastructural facilities which provide the necessary enabling environment for economic recovery and alleviation of poverty (Eghosa, 2005).

However, precipitate action in the removal of protection for domestic industries as has been observed in the implementation of structural adjustment programmes in Sub-Sahara African countries has the potential of destroying domestic industrial and intensifying poverty (Eghosa, 2005).

The net effect of this IMF/World Bank inspired economic policy is the continuing pauperization of Nigerian masses. Privatization has meant the transfer of public wealth to a few individuals who have exploited and deprived Nigerians over the years, especially foreigners and their local agents.

In most instances, public enterprises are sold for less than their net worth all inspired by the bogey of attracting foreign investment. Increased unemployment is an unavoidable consequence of privatization, this means mass poverty for the people. Given the low level of industrialization and the SAP-induced under-utilization of industrial capacity in the Nigerian economy, trade liberalization has translated into the restriction of Nigeria to primary production.

Even with this, the price of primary commodities is externally determined making access to basic facilities and resources impossible and unaffordable for over ninety percent of the population. Deregulation and the removal of price control means that Nigeria's have to pay substantially more even for what they produce domestically and at a time when wages are held down artificially.

The IMF's strategy of SAP stipulates the withdrawal of the so-called Subsidies on social services and public utilities (ASUU, 2002). This economic paradigm also informs government policy on management of the currency and money market. To contend with the worsening state of poverty level of this economic policy,

there is a resort to collect more foreign loans largely from the IMF, World Bank and other similar multilateral loan agencies. Since 1986, Nigerians have been drawn into a long and tortuous restructuring of the Nigerian economy. But contrary to the verdict of Nigerians that the military foistered the IMF inspired economic agenda on the Nigerian people.

The second coming of General Olusegun Obasanjo in May 1999 has fanatically pursued the IMF's SAP agenda through the implementation of the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) a neo-liberal policy. Currently President Umaru Shehu Yar'adua is pursuing an Economic Vision 2020 propagated by Obasanjo coupled with his seven point agenda. This is how poverty is being continuously entrenched in the country.

By implementing the earlier mentioned neo-liberal policies a lot of Nigerians have been left unemployed not self employed, a lot of jobs are regulated between the private sector and public sector. In other words Nigerians seek survival through various means. The prolonged economic crises in Nigeria has left the productive age group between 15-50 years unemployed; a lot have either been retrenched or retired to meet the conditions of the IMFs loan.

This has further exacerbated poverty in Nigeria's youth. This youthful group is mostly affected by HIV/AIDS 15-49 years. In the absence of gainful employment most get involved in sexually activity mutually or commercially to get some form of material benefit, gratification, interest or acquisition attached to it.

The hot spots are areas or regions of high prevalence these are noted in Abuja and its surrounding states, oil producing regions of Nigeria (Fig. 1). Most poverty impoverished people move or migrated to these regions seeking a better life because these areas are expected to have high circulation of capital or money because Abuja is the seat of power and a lot of political office holders get rich through their offices by awarding

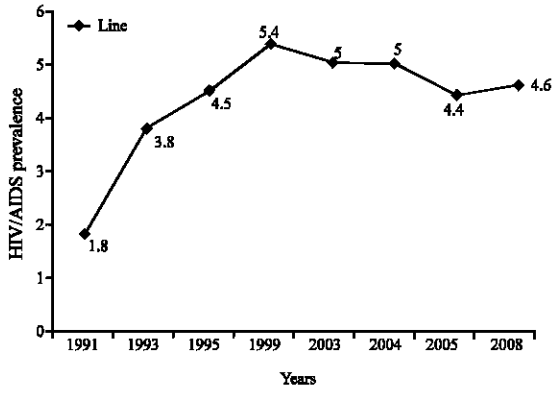

Fig. 1: HIV/AIDS prevalence in Nigeria

contracts amongst other fraudulent means of acquiring wealth. The unemployed get involved with the wealthily as sugar daddies, sugar mummies and lot of sexual activity transits to get wealth. In the oil producing regions too, the same happens people sleep around with rich oil workers to get a better or decent life. This way the HIV/AIDS has been spread over the years and this has further increased the preponderance. The age group mostly affected is the youth aged 15-49 years because they are sexually active. Coincidentally, this is the engine room or strength of the nation's economic potentials.

The socio-economic implication of the epidemic has several effects. One of the socio-economic dimensions is that it impinges on the potential labour force of the nation that should work to alleviate poverty. When the age group 15-49 years is affected productivity is restricted. The age 1-14 years are mostly orphaned by the demise of parents or guardians. This age group is not very productive because they cannot fend for themselves adequately and meet their needs when they cannot feed well their health status drops and immunity level depreciates. Those that are 50 years and above do not have the strength of the youthful group to continue to foster economic activities. As the impact of the economic crises has no palliative measures the impact has been growing over the years.

This has continued to increase the prevalence over the years; until the government intervention policy was enacted (area) this has affected the productive populations in all the social sectors of the country. It will affect millions more because it reflects on all aspects of the social and economic lives.

Households have to cope with the impact through private transfers and by adjusting household composition of members before and after an adult death, this household composition is dynamic. AIDS deaths reduce the economic welfare of survivors, at least temporarily and some households are more vulnerable than others (dependency, Death industry). This will likely increase the already large numbers of poor people in Nigeria who cannot afford to feed themselves or cater for their needs.

So there is a relationship between vulnerable HIV/AIDS affected households to all households in poverty. A recent review by the World Bank (1996) states that regardless of a country's HIV/AIDS prevalence the health and nutrition of people affected deteriorates as such world bank operations on population, health and nutrition takes into cognizance HIV/AIDS victims in their intervention operations. The magnitude of the AIDS cries has drawn attention to the fact that millions of people in the developing world do not have access to the medicines

that are needed to treat disease or alleviate suffering. Each day close to eight thousand die of AIDS in the developing world (Hoen, 2003). The reasons for lack of access to essential medicines are manifold but in many cases the high prices of drugs are a barrier to needed treatment. Prohibitive drug prices are often the result of strong intellectual property protection. Governments in developing countries that attempt to bring the price of medicines down have come under pressure from industrialized countries and the multinational pharmaceutical industry.

The new medicines that are vital for the survival of millions are already too costly for the vast majority of people in poor countries. In addition, investment in Research and Development (R and D) towards the health needs of people in developing countries where three quarters of the world population lives, account for >10% of the global pharmaceutical market. The implementation of trade-related Aspects of Intellectual property Rights Agreements (TRIPS or Agreement) is expected to have a further upward effect on the drug prices while increased R and D investment that aims at addressing health needs in developing countries, despite higher levels of intellectual property protection is not expected (MSF, 2001).

One third of the world population lacks access to most basic essential drugs and in the poorest parts of Africa and Asia this figure climbs to one half. Accesses to treatment for diseases in developing countries is problematic either because the medicines are unaffordable have become ineffective due to resistance or are not sufficiently adapted to specific local conditions and constraints.

Many factors contribute to the problem of limited access to essential medicines. Unavailability can be caused by logistical supply and storage problems, quality control, inappropriate selection of drugs, wasteful prescription and inappropriate use, inadequate production, prohibitive prices and poverty. Despite the enormous burden of disease, drug discovery and development targeted at infectious and parasitic diseases in poor countries has virtually ground to a standstill because drug companies in developed and developing nations simply cannot recoup the cost of R and D for products to treats diseases that abound in developing countries.

COMMERCIAL DIMENSION OF EXPORTS AND IMPORTS OF FOOD

Food is traded and marketed on a global basis. The European Union in the year 2005 was the top importer based on a World Bank report. The variety and availability of food is no longer restricted by the diversity of locally grown food or the limitations of the local growing season. Van den Bossche (2005) observed that there has been a 400% increase worldwide in food exports between 1961 and 1999. Regmi (2001) affirmed that some countries are now economically dependent on food exports which in some cases, accounts for over 80% of all exports. In 1994, over 100 countries became signatories to the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in a dramatic increase in trade liberalization.

This included an agreement to reduce subsidies paid to farmers, underpinned by the World Trade Organization (WTO) enforcement of agricultural subsidy, tariffs, import quotas and settlement of trade disputes that cannot be bilateral resolved. And where trade barriers are raised on the disputed grounds of public health and safety, the WTO forwards the dispute to the codex Alimentarius Commission which was founded in 1962 by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization. Trade Liberalization has greatly affected world food trade.

Food marketing brings together the producer and consumer. It is a chain of activities that bring food from the farm to the plate. The marketing of the food products is a complicated process that involves many producers and companies. This includes transportation, manufacture of cans and printing of their labels.

MODERN ERA

According to Magaret (1997) in modern era, the sale of surplus food took place once a week when farmers took their products on market days into a local village market place. Here the food was sold to grocers for sale in their local shops for purchase by local consumers. The advent of industrialization changed the food development industry; a wide range of food could be sold and distributed in distant locations.

The 20th century supermarkets changed that by a revolution that created warehouse, out of town supermarket and selling a wide range of food from around the world. Food retailing is a two tier market in which a small number of companies control a large proportion of supermarkets. The supermarkets giants wield great purchasing power over farmers and processors and strong influence over consumers. Nevertheless, >10% of consumer spending on food goes to farmers with large percentages going to advertising, transport and intermediate corporation (Magdoff *et al*., 2000). Consumers worldwide face rising food prices; the factors responsible for this include the freak weather, dramatic

changes in the global economy including higher oil prices, lower food reserves and a growing consumer demand for Asian countries particularly China and India. In the long term, food prices are expected to stabilize. Farmers will grow more grain for both fuel and food and eventually bring prices down. However, the Food and Agriculture organization projects that consumers still face, at least until 2018, more expensive food.

It is rare that the spikes are hitting all major foods in most countries at once. Food prices rose by 4% in the United States in 2007 the highest since 1990. As of December 2007, 37 countries faced food crises and 20 had imposed some sort of food price control. In the 1980's and 1990's farm subsidies and support programs allowed major grain exporting countries to hold large surpluses which could be tapped during food shortages to keep prices down. But new trade policies have made agricultural production much more responsive to market demands that putting global food reserves at their lowest since 1983.

The resultant effect of inflation on food is starvation and hunger. This directly or indirectly affects the health of individuals because lacks of good health retards or decelerate the productivity of the individuals concerned. This productivity is reflected in the economy of the nation, it either enhances its growth otherwise or stunts or truncates the buoyancy of the economy. It is clear that a few nations determine the nature of marketing on food, particularly from the developing country of which Nigeria is one and few individuals get richer at the expense of the producer the farmer and the consumer.

CONCLUSION

The government of Nigeria should refrain from further accepting and implementing programmes from the West and use the resources of the nation judiciously because if the government is to collect loans, the stringent conditions attached to it world further enslave the independence particularly the economy because the economic environment is not the same as that of the West. The acceptance of loans from the IMF, World Bank, Paris Club and others with their neo-liberal policies has further exacerbated the Nigerian economic crisis.

This has led to retrogression or retarded human and economic development as well as malnutrition. When there is no good food and health, then there can be no economic development. Lastly, these neo-liberal policies and food aid should be contemplated with caution because of their long term impact on the economy and health of Nigerians. Food aid is used as a political tool to influence the policies of the destination countries, a strategy known as food politics is often misused to enhance the market of donor countries, a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

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