Nutrition security in West Africa (Nigeria in focus): The fundamental concerns and resolutions

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Abstract

For decades to this present year 2017, there have been records of various crises such as natural disasters, insecurity and terrorism, pest infestations on crops, inflation and recession, poverty and malnutrition, Climate change and the list goes on; we have our hands full! These developments are accompanied with shattering health-related issues which are linked to Food and nutrition insecurity in the globe. Scientists and experts in Food, nutrition and other relevant disciplines are stirred up to intensify research, development with innovations that address the challenges facing the actualization of nutrition security at household, community, national and global levels. It is also a major concern that countries in the globe especially in Africa have not been able to successfully feed her growing population, let alone ensure nutrition security for healthy living and defense from diseases. In 2015, the dominant risk factor of food and nutrition insecurity in Nigeria was conflict which affected about 31.1% of the Nigerian population. Using Nigeria as a case study, this paper will review these issues, examining the various intervention programs, projects and policies put forward by the Nigerian government. The progress made so far by regulatory bodies in ascertaining food quality and safety will also be examined. A clear distinction between Food security and Nutrition security will be highlighted; probing the feeding habits of her citizens, social and cultural behaviour and their interactions within the food systems as it relates to their impacts on nutrition security. The need for research and development with strong communication network for nutrition security will be immensely discussed and in conclusion, strategic measures to adopt in actualizing Nutrition security in Africa will be recommended.

Key words: Nutrition security, Food security, poverty, malnutrition, government, research, intervention, policies, feeding habits, household, cultural behaviour, food systems, communication network, regulatory bodies, food quality and safety.



Fig .1: The Impacts of Social and Cultural Behaviour on Nutrition security
http://www.nutritionsecurity.org/images/NutritionSecurity_Picture.gif

Recent Publications

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Joy N Emelogu is a passionate science communicator and Scientific Officer in the National Biotechnology Development Agency, Nigeria. She has her expertise in Food science and Technology and has indulged in researches related to food and nutrition security, some of which are on seeds and nuts, bio-fortified and fermented foods, which are still on-going. Her interest in Food and Nutrition security sparked up during her undergraduate study when she sighted the disposal of a heap of leafy vegetables. She later did her first research on the processing and preservation of leafy vegetables using specific treatment methods and parameters to address post-harvest losses. She volunteered in the Nigerian Youth Service Corps Community Development Group; The Health Campaign, as the General Secretary, where she together with the executive team pioneered sensitization programs on nutrition, health, fitness and wellness. Currently, she is the General Secretary of the Animal Genetic Resources project team, Nigeria.

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