

Hunger in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era

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ABSTRACT

Hunger has both surreptitiously and perspicuously ravaged the human population worldwide. The ingestion of adequate and nutritious food is the essential ingredient for growth and development as well as the major panacea to curb hunger and strife. COVID-19 has ushered in a unique dimension whereby private and public institutions advocate sustainable trajectories by making appropriate choices designed to encourage empowerment and justice to overcome hunger worldwide. Prior to the advent of COVID-19, sustainable policies advocated expansive conceptual fields involving the individual, nuclear and extended family, governance and administration as well as Society at large because hunger has incessantly been widespread and detrimental to human welfare and well-being. Persons who are always hungry are the extremely poor and vulnerable populations with perspicuous chronic hunger. In order to circumvent the devastating effects of hunger, it is pertinent to demonstrate behavioural changes, develop and enhance literacy and sustainable skills.

Keywords: *food security, malnutrition, morbidity, mortality, infections, environment, economy*

INTRODUCTION

World organizations advocate improvements and remedies that sustainable development necessitates progressive change in personal attitudes, behaviour and public policies. Conversely, these do not correlate with the expansion of industrial economies to the detriment of persistently obliterating global space meant for food and agricultural produce due to anthropogenic activities. The resultant products and waste with campaigns that non-industrialised countries comply to a different trajectory for biodiversity protection is not sustainable (Chukwuma, 1996) with the incessant agricultural crises (Chukwuma 1995a, Chukwuma 2014). Due to the diminished capacity of researchers and scientists to venture into the field for data collation, they resorted to armchair investigation as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and other preventive and regulatory measures (Chukwuma, 2020a, Xiao-Guang et al., 2020).

Globally, during recent decades, the number of hungry persons and communities reduced precipitously, but a vast majority of the global population continue to face extreme hunger. The preponderance of inaccessible food security has been exacerbated due to the extreme protective

measures from the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic (Bread for the World. 2020).

ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Several intricately complex, varied and inextricably-linked etiological factors contribute and enhance the state of world hunger (Chukwuma, 2008, Bread for the World, 2020). These include abject poverty or penury, lack of and insecure job provision, improper health and healthcare, untoward policies, inadequate logistics and transportation for agricultural produce, fragile markets, disruption of food and water security, inappropriate application of pesticides and fertilisers containing inordinate quantities of heavy metals (Chukwuma, 1995b), climate change (NOAA, 2020), belligerency amongst communities and nations, deficient food nutritional quality and quantity, discrimination and inequitable distribution of resources (Bread for the World, 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the socioeconomic disparities across borders and communities, there has been expansive cooperativity, togetherness, love and care. The lockdown, however, introduced several economic hardships (Siguerva et al., 2020), such as coronavirus famine, food insecurity, and adverse hunger which may have culminated in

grave morbidity and mortality in correlation with the coronavirus infection. It becomes perspicuous that pertinent commodities, stimuli and pecuniary measures be judiciously provided to ameliorate or preclude the COVID-19 sequelae. Neglecting to combat hunger may have caused severe malnutrition and starvation as evident in war torn or ravaged ambients. These correlate to salient risk factors or determinants (Chukwuma, 2020b) for compromised immune systems and facilitated susceptibility to infection rates, life-threatening disorders associated with the novel coronavirus. These disorders include severe respiratory distress, pneumonia, diarrhoea, cholera and other gastrointestinal diseases (Chaolin et al. 2020) as well as emerging and re-emerging diseases (Chukwuma, 2018) due to poor sanitation and inadequate water supply.

Different trends in hunger, food security, disease, economy, poverty and environment from the COVID-19 pandemic in disparate countries and world regions remain inexplicable to an appreciable magnitude due to the lockdown, excruciating measures, lack of information and communication (Chukwuma, 2020a) to curb comorbidities and mortality rates. In order to elucidate the etiological risk factors and determinants associated with the pandemic, the contents of this conspectus may need to be achieved.

DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 economic recovery palliative, package or stimulus must make provision for families to have prompt and adequate access to food and other resources during and post pandemic crisis. With the sporadic dissemination of the novel coronavirus in diminished- or dissipated-resource contexts, improved nutrition for the vulnerable populations becomes increasingly important. The required stimulus must be designed to respond to changes in anticipated and proactive need, tailored and customized to the crisis associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

These may ultimately address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public and environmental health (El Zowalaty et al., 2020), hunger and malnutrition. Through sustainable development (Chukwuma, 1996) policies, governance and administration which will provide for poverty alleviation and hunger eradication, it is pertinent that extensive help and opportunities are made available to vulnerable populations. Unfortunately, there are extant severe limitations and constraints in the LDCs or non-industrialised countries

(Chukwuma, 1995c) on increasing the sustainable portion of resources that could be expected to circumvent these aberrations. There is steady economic growth in certain regions of the LDCs but to a diminutive magnitude in sub-Saharan Africa, where there are extant diminished capability to access to veritable information and communication (Chukwuma, 1991), deficient integration into the global economic structure, compromised political independence, heavy dependence on fossil fuels as essential energy supplies, environ-mental perturbation (Chukwuma 1996) and lack of planning for research and practice (De Ver Dye et al, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Hunger, food insecurity and disease have been monitored and evaluated for decades, but the sudden emergence of the novel coronavirus and non-preparedness and inchoate policies did not provide the latitude to effectively combat the dilemma. Due to the disparities in availability of data employed for event classification, the procedure to estimate and stem hunger during and post-COVID-19 pandemic may tend to vary and problematic. However, the sustainability goals and laudable recommendations depicted in this paper cannot be extinguished because of lacunae in data collation regarding the impact of the novel coronavirus on world hunger.

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