

**AN EXTRAPOLATION STUDY ON THE POLITICS OF FOOD AID IN
AFRICA IN VIEW OF THE DANGER IT PORTENDS FOR THE
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS' HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY: A
SPECIAL FOCUS ON NORTHEAST NIGERIA**

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Abstract

That Africa is in dire need of food security now as never before is not in doubt. This is so because hunger is widespread, poverty is on the increase, population is exploding, unemployment is massive, food prices are skyrocketing and the issue of internally displaced persons is on the rise. To cushion the effects of these challenges, food aid seems to be an expedient option. Against the foregoing, the purpose of this paper is to extrapolate food aid politics in Africa in view of the danger it portends for the internally displaced persons' household food security focusing specially on Northeast Nigeria where there are as many as 2.2million idps. Adopting futures studies approach, the paper observes from an array of secondary sources that food aid politics in Africa had at different times threatened the peoples' food security. The paper argues that in so far as food aid remains a political tool for achieving divergent interests, it has potential dangers for the idps' household food security especially those in Northeast Nigeria where rehabilitation programme is ongoing. These dangers are likely to be more for the most vulnerable-women and children. The aid programme has the potential of making women and children develop Western consumerism habit which they may not be able to maintain when aid stops. The implication of this is a new wave of household food insecurity arising from detesting some native food, not having access to adequate supply of the cherished food and lacking the zeal to go back to the farm. To be out of the debacle they may go into prostitution, child labour, early marriage, begging or house helping-short term measures that do not guarantee long term household food security. To forestall this danger, the federal government that is rehabilitating the Northeast should make sure it handles the aid programme with caution even if the donors insist on business as usual. Education of the women and children should be the priority so they can know how best to manage the post aid period.

Keywords: Africa, Food Aid Politics, Food Security, Household Food security, Internally Displaced Persons, Northeast Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to make a sense of world politics without reference to security matters (Williams, 2003). This is largely true following the worsening food security situations as well as exponential

rate of increase in the number of internally displaced persons hereafter referred to as the idps in Africa. These critical security matters are no doubt, by-products of politics. In confirming this



claim, Clover (2003) reveals that whereas global, national and human security issues are increasingly converging and in some regions, overlapping, a situation that makes some 840 million people worldwide to be malnourished, the highest percentage of these are in Africa. This implies that the magnitude of the problem in Africa has now reached unprecedented crisis level thereby making the continent as Clover asserts, one that receives most aid, with some 30 million people requiring emergency food aid in any one year.

The point therefore is that since 2003 when Clover made the above observations and claims, instead of Africa's crisis situation improving, it is deteriorating, a fact which manifests for example in the number of idps in Northeastern Nigeria where Boko Haram insurgency has devastated the region, its economy and people thereby making many households to face food insecurity situations of an alarming proportion. This situation and others continually make aid programmes an integral part of the strategies and programmes for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of many devastated areas and peoples in the continent. Evidence has it that 60% of the World. Food Programme's work now takes place in Africa (Clover, 2003).

However, the argument arising from the increasing issues pertaining to food aid in Africa is that it is politically motivated and as such fails largely to address the vulnerable people's household food

insecurity. Take for instance, the appeal to the international community in 2002 by Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho for aid never stabilized their food insecurity situations even when there were responses. Earlier before 2002, the same Lesotho was offered emergency food aid in 1972/73 by Britain following an unfortunate drought condition in the country (Stevens, 1979). The logic therefore is, if food aid was all that good for Lesotho, why didn't the country stabilize its food security as to avoid the 2002 appeal for another international aid. The foregoing logic thus confirms that food aid is as close to an ideal form of aid as can likely be found in an imperfect world. As Marsh (1996:364) puts it, "donations of aid give the impression that the rich nations are indeed helping their unfortunate friends. In reality, aid is often a double-edged sword." This logic nevertheless is the basis for the making of this paper as it seeks to extrapolate the politics of food aid in view of the danger it portends for the idps household food security especially in Northeast Nigeria where rehabilitation and reconstruction projects are on-going. To achieve this aim, the paper is divided into sections such as methodology, literature review, the politics of food aid and food security in Africa, the impending danger of the politics of food aid on the idps household food security in Northeast Nigeria, conclusion and recommendations.

Methodology

This paper adopts the methods and approaches of futures studies. Generally, as argued, futures studies do not pretend to be able to predict the future but rather, assesses the probabilities of alternating futures. So, apart from the study, analysis is carried out to ascertain how particular situations and environment could be affected as a result of a policy implementation or action taken by a country (Saedah, 2005). As such, in extrapolating politics of food aid in Africa, this paper aims to present information and strategies that can enable the Nigerian, government, states, institutions etc. plan the future of the Northeast in particular and Nigeria in general in order to reduce dependency on food aid as a measure of achieving household food security for the vulnerable class, especially the idps. The paper relies heavily on secondary sources of information as well as observational method in order to achieve the aim. Although, futures studies as a method and an approach have limitations such as relying heavily on human judgement which cannot be 100 percent correct and not being able in some cases to make forecasts of some complex systems possible, it has the potential of predicting the future based on facts available. For instance, insofar as food aid politics since inception has not helped establish household food security in places it has been played in Africa as the Southern African examples have shown, this paper predicts that the result may not be too different in the case of Northeast Nigeria except the Nigerian

government and other food aid policy makers and implementers have to change the status quo.

Literature Review

Food Security

The 1996 World Summit in Rome having looked at issues surrounding food security has defined it as a state when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996). By implication what is important in this definition is the fact that not only is food to be available, it has to be easily accessed by everybody at an affordable rate, at anytime. The available food, Moreso, has to be safe and nutritious as to be able to provide the consumer with the required kilocalories needed for active and healthy life. Earlier, the United Nations has conceived food security as all people at all times having both physical and economic access, and not just access to the basic food they need, a point the committee on World Food Security, a body set up in 1975 by the UN World Food Conference to oversee developments in food security, adopted in the early 1980's through its recognition of food security as a tripartite concept, reflecting the criteria of availability, access and stability (<http://www.interacademycouncil.net>).

However, food security involves multiplicity of factors and institutions



including implementation of policies, strategies and programmes to guarantee its availability, accessibility, effective and efficient utilization by all people at all times. Based on the tripartite concepts of food security identified by United Nations above, UNEP (2002:288), further views food security from three dimensions:

- Availability of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production imports;
- Access by households and individuals to appropriate foods for a nutritious diet;
- Optimal uptake of nourishment, thanks to a sustaining diet, clean water and adequate sanitation with healthcare.

Elucidating further, Laibuni, Omiti and Natu (<http://elibrary.acbfpact.org>) include domestic production, import capacity, availability of food stocks and food distribution systems in a country or region to what justifies availability of food. In terms of access to food, they are of the view that purchasing power (that is, incomes and wages, poverty level, prices and distribution of food, transport and market systems essentially determine food accessibility. Then, effective utilization of food is influenced by people's culture, access to knowledge about proper nutrition, energy and clean water, points also noted by UNEP (2002).

Summarizing what food security is, Food Security Continuum puts it thus: Food Security is not just a poverty issue; it is a much large issue that involves the whole food system and affects every one of us in some way. The food system includes:

- (1) Everyone who grows or catches food, like farmers, fishers, and hunters,
- (2) Earth, air, water, energy (the physical environment);
- (3) Food processors, packagers, distributors, marketers and advertisers;
- (4) Food wholesalers and the warehouses where food is stored;
- (5) The transportation system i.e., trucks, planes, boats, trains;
- (6) Places that sell food i.e., grocery stores, markets, bakeries, farm stands, co-ops, restaurants;
- (7) Governments, policies, taxes, (the political and economic environment);
- (8) The healthcare system, the workforce, schools, technology (the social, educational and cultural environment);
- (9) Everyone who eats! So, food security is in place when:
- (10) Farmers and fishers can earn a fair income for their efforts;
- (11) Food is produced in a way that is safe for people and the environment;
- (12) Local, regional, and community food production is supported;
- (13) Social justice and inclusion are priorities.

- (14) All people are empowered to work together to create positive change in the food system and communities (Food Security Continuum).

Food Insecurity

Conversely, the corollary of food security, that is, food insecurity as Ikpi et al (1989) put it, is lack of access to enough food. This definition stems from the argument that it is not just enough to believe there is food security in the world because food is abundantly available but to have access to it is also important. According to Schuh (2002), the lack of food is due to the lack of the means to acquire it, it is not, in general, due to a shortfall in production. On this ground, Food Security Continuum summarizes that food insecurity happens whenever food is hard to get such as when:

- (15) There are no farms or grocery stores nearby;
- (16) Our food travels great distances to get to us;
- (17) There isn't enough money;
- (18) Healthy and safe food is not available;
- (19) Healthy foods cost more than unhealthy foods;
- (20) Our rivers are polluted so fish don't survive;
- (21) Our traditional foods are not available or accessible.

As can be deduced from the above, Africa is suffering from food insecurity especially in areas where poverty is

higher, war is ongoing or waning and food is hard to get. The Northeastern Nigeria presently fits into this kind of scenario due to so many years of boko haram devastation of the region. The worst hits are the internally displaced persons who suffer, above all mentioned, household food insecurity. Evidence of Africa's food insecurity can be captured in International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies(2009); The Economist (2004); www.WFP.org.

Household Food Insecurity

Amartya Sen has been credited with initiating the paradigm shift in the early 1980s that brought focus to the issue of access and entitlement to food (Clover, 2003). Thus, as remarked by Clover, food insecurity is no longer seen as failure of agriculture to produce sufficient food at the national level, but instead as a failure of livelihoods to guarantee access to sufficient food at the household level. The ability to ensure adequate food security therefore, hinges on the ability to identify vulnerable households who are at risk of becoming food insecure.

Stemming from this backdrop, a household is food secure when it has access to the food needed for a healthy life for all its members (adequate in terms of quality, quantity, safety and culturally acceptable), and when it is not at undue risk of losing such access (<http://www.unsystem.org/scn/archives/scnnews07supplement/ch2.htm>). Sequel to this, an appropriate proxy, therefore,



in identifying vulnerable households, is how poor is a particular household measured against criterion or poverty-line. The degree of vulnerability of an individual, household or group of persons is determined by their exposure to the risk factors and their ability to cope with or withstand stressful situations. The proposition therefore is that vulnerable households will constitute three groups:

- (22) Those who would be vulnerable under any circumstances: for example, where the adults are unable to provide an adequate livelihood for the household for reasons of disability, illness, age or some other characteristics,
- (23) Those whose resources endowment is inadequate to provide sufficient income from any available source;
- (24) Those whose characteristics and resources render them potentially vulnerable in the context of social and economic shocks; e.g. those who find it hard to adapt to sudden changes in economic activity brought about by economic policy;

As can be viewed from the television and other electronics media and even literature, the conditions of the idps and other vulnerable groups are not far from the proposals made above. Indeed, argues <http://www.interacademycouncil.net>, food insecurity and conflict derive from a commons et of risk factors which include poor economic conditions, repressive political systems, weak

institutions, natural resource degradation, scarce resources and unequal poverty growth, social and cultural polarization and large-scale migration. This has been confirmed by President Muhammadu Buhari during the recently concluded Paris Conference on Climate Change, when he informed the world that due to desert encroachment in Northeast Nigeria, many households have lost their means of livelihood and to survive, have migrated to Europe for greener pasture (Nwosumba, 2016).

Food Aid

Food aid is hard to define due to many related issues. However, in general, it is about providing food, a related assistance to tackle hunger, either in emergency situations or to help with deeper, long term hunger alleviation and achieve food (where people do not have to live in hunger or fear of starvation) (Shah, 2007). This definition logically insinuates that food aid is usually to be given in situations of need. In line with this logic, Barret and Maxwell (2004) conceive food aid as international concessional flows in the form of food or of cash to purchase food in support of food assistance programmes. At this juncture, it is interesting to deduce from Barret and Maxwell the fact that food aid and food assistance are interrelated so whether it is called food aid or food assistance they signify the same thing. Based on the deduction, this paper shall use both names interchangeably.

However, notwithstanding that the later definition connotes that of the first, Shah (2007) is of the view that there is a key distinction, the second one makes and that is that international sourcing of concessional resources is tied to the provision of food, whether by a donor or to a recipient. The implication as observed by Shah is that food aid has been tied with conditions which benefit the donor and this has been one of the reasons food aid has not been effective; instead of benefiting the recipients more, it is the multinational food companies and donors that enjoy the large benefit. On this basis it is rightly debatable to conclude that food aid is largely driven by donors and international institutions (typically influenced by the interests of the donors). Food aid is one of the most effective devices for alleviating transient hunger in emergencies. The argument is that, in such situations, where large households are simultaneously affected, food aid is the most effective insurance mechanism to reduce vulnerability to transient hunger and starvation, as households have few options (<http://www.interacademycouncil.net>).

This, however, does not mean that in all ramifications, food aid promotes food security especially at the household level in recipient countries. To some people, food aid is as close to an ideal form of aid as we are likely to find in an imperfect world (Stevens, 1979). Food aid, to say the obvious, is a kind of foreign aid which is given mainly by 'a have country' to the vulnerable groups in 'a have less' country which

tantamount to political interest. For an example, the definition of foreign aid by former President John Kennedy of United States as "a method by which the United States maintains a position of influence and control around the world and sustains a good many countries which would definitely collapse..." (Magdoff, 1968) captures the political motif for foreign aid in general.

Further, foreign aid agencies provide an opening wedge or point of entry for private capital through making loans directly to the global giants both for feasibility studies and actual implementations and sponsor aid programmes such as Food for Peace (Offiong, 1980). This point however can better be captured in a situation where World Food Programme has been designated since 1963 to alleviate acute hunger by providing emergency relief following natural or man-made humanitarian disasters and to supply food aid to people in developing countries in order to eradicate chronic under nourishment, support social development and promote self-reliant communities (Frame, Thomas, Holman et. al, 2008) but today these challenges have escalated. Instead of giving technical assistance to African countries in the form of transfer of technology, the industrialized countries prefer giving aid when and where they want through WFP and their other agencies. The implication of this is that food aid has some problems. It is the view of Schuh (2002) that food aid has strong disincentive effects for poor producers just as cheap



imports can affect the morale of African farmers whose products cannot compete favourably with those from the advanced countries. Bissong (2004) in accord with Schuh refers to food aid as victimization through charity which continues to create dependencies. It is on the observation of this, especially taking a clue from other African countries where food aid was more detrimental to their food security, that this paper seeks to advice the rehabilitators of Northeast Nigeria to be cautions with food aid.

The Politics of Food Aid and Food Security in Africa

Certain questions are necessarily needed to be answered before a good understanding of food aid politics and worsening state of household food security in Africa can be made. For instance, why is it that it is only the world food programme that is the only multilateral organization in the world with a mandate to use food aids as resource? Why is it that even when more foods are available unlike many years ago, they are still not easily accessed by the poor in Africa? More so, why is it that food aid is as close to an ideal form of aid as is likely to be found in an imperfect world? Also, why is it that in spite of the fact that the right to food is one of those most consistently mentioned in international human rights documents, it is the most frequently violated in recent times?

In the words of FAO (2002:1), “no human right has been so frequently and spectacularly violated in recent times as

right to food.” This is done without considering the fact that the right to food is one of the most consistently enshrined rights in international human rights law, as constantly reaffirmed by governments (clover, 2003). The fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger is established in Article II of the international covenant on economic, social and cultural law inspired by the Universal declaration of Human Rights (food security Guide). Thus, it is right to claim that Africa’s food security including those of national, Local and household problems stem from disregard of the fundamental right to food. On this ground however, many critics have alleged that decision making at the national and international levels have relied on the defied neo-liberal paradigm of wealth maximization through comparative advantage to create food insecurity and more so undermine the unity and hope for food security in Africa in the near future (Clover, 2003; Mwaniki, www.un.org/Africa; Goshit, 2003; Eke, 2009). Nwaniki (www.un.org/Africa) for instance, stresses this point further to the extent of blaming the interrelation of the various dimensions of globalization where policies made in one country are bound to have effects on others for Africa’s worsening food insecurity. This is so because while the rules and practice of international trade play a key role in achieving food security in the world free trade is not good for African countries who face huge trade barriers from those who control the process, i.e. the developed, industrialized nations. The

implication of this anomaly is that instead of practicing the policy of openness as enshrined in various international trade agreements, the developed/industrialized nations have overtly and covertly protected their markets and by so doing left African markets in disadvantaged positions. The result therefore is that through unequal trade relations between Africa and the centre countries, agricultural products have become worthless mainly because of subsidies these countries advance to their farmers and industries. A case to buttress this point is where in 2002-2003, a collapse in coffee prices at the international market contributed to the Ethiopian food crisis the same period (Mason, 2006). This is a result of the policy of protectionism practiced in the name of national interest by the industrialized nations who eventually force Africa to open its markets in the name of trade liberalization.

Imagine a situation where in 2001/2002 the United States subsidized its cotton farmers by almost 4 billion dollars while the entire cotton production for the same period was 3 billion dollars (Ekoriko, 2004). This implies that the farmers got in subsidies more than the value of their output, a situation which resulted to the inability of some cotton exporting countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Benin not to compete favourably.

As a spill-over effect of over-subsidization of agricultural production in the industrialized countries by their governments, African countries find

their domestic markets under cut by cheap food imports dumped by these rich countries. Worst still, these over subsidized foods are the ones given to Africans as food aid. The logic that is rife here is that worsening household food insecurity and food insecurity at large in Africa are artificially created by these measures and with the collaboration of the indigenous bourgeois class in the countries. This is so because as WTO which is charged with the responsibility of binding government to keep to the trade policies agreed upon by member countries fails to do so thereby allowing some countries to over subsidize while others cannot, it has indirectly pushed local farmers in Africa out of business due to dumping of cheap import which comparatively is not even cheap for the poor but for the fact that many households really depend on proceeds (goods and money) from their farms to survive, they cannot buy due to lack of money. The implication of this is that many households that lack means to buy food at any rate are landed into a state of household's food insecurity. If this is not offloading politics in the name of food aid, why should it take about four to five months for food to be delivered in some cases from donor countries to African countries where there are emergencies and urgent need for food. Take for instance the Niger Republic experience where in late 2004 there were earliest warnings of emergency food situation in that country but due to the late response of the major powers or even WFP, by the time aid



arrived, 3.6 million people were already suffering from hunger (Mason, 2006).

This experience therefore serves as a lesson to those who believe that food aid is just a humanitarian gesture given to the vulnerable, endangered and displaced persons by the developed, rich countries. They however fail to know that inasmuch as food aid is not all that reliable as to have it immediately as the need arises and as it is not sustainable; it is never the less a political instrument for advancing neo-imperialism and subjecting the recipients to a perpetual state of dependency. The argument is in consonance with Galtung (1973) stance that the relationship between the Third World (Africa inclusive) and the rich nations is not a relation that aims at equalizing the status quo. In support of this line of thought Good Security Guide (www.oneworld.net/guides) remarks that even when the US is the largest food donor, it remains in thrall to domestic political interests which insist that aid should be disbursed as surplus grain from national stocks – and that the chain of delivery must be handled largely by US contractors.

Based on the foregoing, some people conceive food aid as being as close to an ideal form of aid can likely be found in an imperfect world (Stevens, 1979). The criticism however is that even when food aid achieves a happy union between the interests of the recipients and those of farmers in the donor countries as it pertains to Africa, it does not fully in most cases satisfy the interest

of the recipients but those of the capitalists. Elaborating this point, Stevens is of the view that food aid is particularly pernicious since it exists largely to help sustain inefficient agricultural policies in developed countries and to increase the leverage that its donors can exert on poor countries and that furthermore it not only fails to benefit the recipient adequately to compensate for these costs but actually puts less developed countries farmers out of business, leads their children to adopt exotic tastes that can be satisfied only by imports, and enables their government to neglect agricultural reform. Relevantly, the essence of this paper has been captured in the sense that if food aid has been like this in most places, the Nigerian state, states in the Northeast and the idps should be cautious at embracing it willy-nilly.

Lesotho provides an example of how emergency relief can cause problem even if supplied on a fairly small scale to a relatively minor emergence. In Stevens (1979) account, Britain offered Lesotho emergency food aid following a drought in that country between 1972/73 but instead of the food aid helping to stabilize food security at that period, it caused some problems. The story is that following the offer by Britain, Lesotho responded that it could absorb 1,000 tons of wheat but when a firm offer came from United Kingdom it was for 6,000tons. As Africans are known to be insatiable of attracting aid, Lesotho government accepted the increased

quantity notwithstanding its limited storage capacity and went ahead to also receive another emergency food aid of over 1,000 tons of wheat against 622 tons it requested earlier, and at the same time, received its normal development food aid deliveries. When all these culminated into a big chunk, the Lesotho government faced the challenge of managing them. The result was the diversion of Lesotho government personnel away from the management of routine food aid into the task of storing and disposing of the surplus wheat, the construction of six new storage sheds at the cost of R 45,000, and the loss through rotting of many bags of wheat. The fact that Lesotho never managed the food aid given to it well because it was in excess justifies the claim that most donors use food aid as an opportunity to off load the excesses from their over subsidized food production and as well implicates that African governments have high gullibility for any type of aid and not only the food related ones. That Lesotho after this never achieved relative food security not to talk of sustainable one goes a long way to prove that food aid in Africa is highly politicized, it benefits the donors and their cohorts more than those it is directed or claimed to be directed at.

In a similar vein, in Nigeria, evidence has it that as some NGOs receive grants-in-aid or subvention for various services, they usually do not direct them to those they are meant for, the victims of emergency situations, they direct some of the relief materials meant to serve

their interest. Agboola (Daily sun,2007:6) for example, reports that UNICEF “have expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that most of the relief materials meant for persons displaced by some local government areas of plateau state have been diverted to unknown places. “According to the report, UNICEF field officer Mr. Jallo who led other officials to the victims in Pugani and Vashi camps (all in Langtang LGA) and Gbonga camp in Kanke LGA because of this dissatisfaction decided to the handover to traditional the remaining items directly leads of the area (instead of the NGOs) to ensure that the items were safe by the time the officials returned another day. This report and other similar ones in Nigeria however, confirm that most Nigerians excel in the art of muddling through once grants-in-aid- are made (Akukwe, 1988). The point therefore is that food aid, like most types of aid breeds corruption to an extent that deters the expected recipients from having its full benefit. This negatively impact on household food security as it creates more hungry people within the fold of the-already-hungry and impoverished poor people. Legitimately, hunger is a political creation and it must be ended by political means (Clover, 2003). The Northeast people and Nigeria as a whole should be aware of these facts in order to avoid dangers.



Why Nursing the Fear of an Impending Danger for Northeast Nigeria IDPS?

The fear of food aid depressing the Northeast Nigeria's already ravaged agricultural production is nursed in this paper because if that happens, it may likely increase, the people dependence on food aid. It implies therefore that the idps are likely to remain in camps in order to attract more food aid. This is not in any way good for them as food aid doesn't guarantee long-term household food security. More so, it is not good to rely on food aid for a meaningful living in the sense that "all aid has an inherent potential to make the recipient dependent" (Stevens, 1979:17). The idps should rather, try to learn how to fish and not wait in perpetuity to be given fish.

Even within the limits established for the aid, argues Stevens, food aid is often small input into a complex food production and marketing system to get to the rural poor direct. It is unevenly distributed as more distributions are made in the urban areas. This means that the idps in rural areas of the Northeast may be deprived access to a (big) chunk of the aid given. Alluding to the fact that there are challenges to humanitarian response in Northeast Nigeria, Imasuen (2015) opines that the absence of humanitarian law and policy framework in Nigeria to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian agencies hampers the coordination of various humanitarian efforts. The lack of systematic data collection also continues to pose serious challenge of difficulty in

estimating people in total number of idps in need as well as the lack of access to rural areas by humanitarian agencies due to its volatility (Global IDP Project, 2014). This is politics and it portends danger because in a country where the federal government in a month hiked the price of fuel from N86.50 to N145 and people were obliged to live with it and they are managing with its consequences, motorcycle operators (a.k.a okada riders) were ordered out of major streets in some states and the federal capital territory and it subsists, where airplanes were deployed to roam the sky in search of oil and gas pipelines vandalizers and it subsists, it is doubttable table that in that nation some idps in rural areas are cut-off from receiving humanitarian aid because of lack of access to them.

It simply means that there is lack of will to extend the services to them. The implication is that the governments (federal, state and local) have neglected the rural idps to a large extent and by doing so made them burden bearers of the consequences of bokoharamism in the region. Their case is likely to worsen unless the government and distribution agencies especially the NGOs will go beyond conventional, orthodox wisdom to work more strategically in developing and implementing effective policies that can encompass all the idps in the region. So, in the absence of this, most rural idps' fundamental right to food shall continue to be violated. When this goes on without checks, the tendency is that their household food security situation is

likely to worsen and this will mean that women and children who are more vulnerable to food threats and insecurity may resort to child labour, forced labour, sex hawking, boko haramism, robbery, migration to the cities etc in order to make ends meet. These activities nevertheless do not guarantee household food security in a mid-term not to talk of long term basis.

Another impending danger of food aid politics on idps household food security lies on the argument that food aid packages are very rigid in the sense that people who receive them do not have a say in how these packages could be modified to suit their needs better. Using Malawi as an example, Jere (2007) observes that during a food crisis in the country, food aid packages provide maize and beans to the people in need because they are normal diet of most Malawians but vegetables are not included most of the time. This means that even when vegetables are normally used by the Malawians to compliment the diet of maize (carbohydrates) and beans (protein) for a more balanced diet in no crisis situation during the time of food aid supply, vegetables are often lacking not minding that they are critically needed in food aid packages as the people are not able to source them again because of the crisis that devastates the food system in most areas.

In the case of the Northeast people of Nigeria whose traditional foods are for example just like most core northerners:

- tuwon dawa, that is ground guinea corn eaten in swallow form with soups like kuka and okra;
- tuwo shinkafa eaten with miyan kuka, that is, a meal of rice pudding and green draw-soup made from ground baobab leaf and special spices, preferably yaji (mixture of ground pepper, ginger, garlic and other seasonings/herbs), giving them a meal of highly processed noodles, spaghetti; macaroni and their like without enough of herbs, vegetables or spices may mean that some of them may begin to develop a new taste of a sweeter diet since the traditional foods although may be sweet but may not be fastly prepared and as sweet as these new ones. The implications of this type of change in taste and diet are multifacetedly far-reaching. First, over indulgence in eating highly processed food may most likely implant in the eater such diseases as diabetes, obesity etc. which are detrimental to the health of the person(s). When these diseases are blown to an advanced stage, they usually make the diseased to be weak and less productive thereby increasing the chances of household food insecurity for the families so affected. Money will be directed to treating them and they may not be able to be bringing either food or other

means of having food in the family especially when they are the bread winners of their households. The most hit are mainly the women and children who depend largely on these kind of providers-turned-dependents and liabilities.

Another effect of developing a new taste for highly processed foods against other highly nutritious native ones is that not minding that those native ones before the boko haram destabilization of the people and their means of livelihood were richer in content, more accessible and cheap because they were produced mainly by the subsistent farmers, many of whom are the today idps, is that when aid will cease, they may not be able to access the new foods easily again. The result as already observed by Nwosumba (2012) is that the development of Western consumerism habit makes the people dependent on emulating Western lifestyle and eating patterns, a point that Stevens (1979) agrees with by adding that possible direct effects of food aid on the receivers is the introduction of alien tastes, undermining of local reliance and health hazards. The resultant effect is that the person(s) in order to meet up with the new taste can do anything to maintain the status quo just like most female students of higher institutions in Nigeria who after tasting high living standard ostentatiously imbibed through following “sugar daddies” and money-bags resort to sex-hawking, armed robbery, petty thievery, menial jobs and all worth not in order to stay afloat.

This point is in line with Uduaghan (2015) revelation that most sex hawkers especially students give food insecurity as one of the reasons for doing the dirty, morally tasking job. In the end most people in this line of life live like drug addicts that hardly survive without taking drugs. The result of the addiction is one disease or the other especially HIV/AIDS and this leads to further impoverishment and worsening household food security.

Where women participate in agricultural production, food security at household and community level is being threatened. All dimensions of food security-availability, stability, access and use of food – are affected where the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is high (Clover, 2003:10).

Farming skills as a consequence of this are likely to be lost, agricultural development to be derailed and rural livelihoods largely disintegrated. As a result, just as Clover proves in the case of some countries in Southern Africa, productive capacity to work the land will likely decline and household earnings likely to shrink. The UN estimates that 9.6% of Zimbabwe’s agricultural labour force was lost in 2000, Malawi losing 5.8% (Financial Times, 2002) because of the foregoing reason. The effects of all this on households in these countries are debilitating as most extended families struggle to cope with the burden. Children are the most hit as most

of them suffer malnutrition. Buttressing this fact, Jere (2007), taking facts from Malawi's Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reveals that close to half of all children under the age of five are stunted in growth. Northeast idps' rehabilitators and the idps themselves should note this in order to avoid it.

In another development, due to the impact of food aid on food markets of most African recipient countries, this paper foresees the danger food aid portends for the Northeast idps' household food security. This is due to the attachment of politics to anything that pertains to food in Africa. The biggest problem food aid creates for the people where it is used to cushion the effects of food insecurity during crisis period is serving as a disincentive for local food producers (who, in the case of Northeast Nigeria are most of the idps) by flooding the market and depressing prices. This claim is insinuating however that because food aid is provided in kind and because most recipients produce food themselves it will have a certain set of effects in addition to any that may arise from the circumstances of recipient countries (Stevens, 1979). More so, as Stevens argues while it is true that food aid must react in some way on food production in recipient countries, it is not clear that it is so different from other modes of aid. Taking foreign aid as a whole as an example, this quotation from former President John Kennedy of America aptly proves that no foreign aid is short of propagating US national interest to the letter that is, in the case of US

involvement. Foreign aid is "a method by which the United States maintains a position of influence and control around the world..." (Magdoff, 1968:117). This is not limited to the US alone however.

Thus, while it is true that food aid may compete with the recipient's domestic agriculture as Stevens (1979) further argues, similar considerations apply to say, technical assistance supplied under financial aid: under this type of assistance rich country personnel (arguably in surplus supply) are sent to poor countries where they may compete with local people, sap the government will be adopt realistic manpower policies, and introduce Western tastes unsuited to local conditions. This approach likely depresses the income of those involved in local industry and as such portends danger for the Northeast Nigeria idps who are already undergoing rehabilitation processes which are aimed at resettling them in their communities. A case to look at is the DRN study carried out in Malawi in 2003 which assessed the effects of the WFP interventions in the country following the 2002/2003 food crisis. The study as revealed by Jere (2007), reveals that the availability of free humanitarian food supplies reduced demand for commercial maize (a major income earning product of Malawians) thereby resulting in unintended excess stocks of commercial maize, a situation that eventually exerted a dampening effect on consumer prices and producer prices for the next harvest. The Nigerian government, Northeastern states and



their local governments and other stakeholders in the Northeastern Nigeria project should play the politics of food aid in that region with caution if they are sincerely sympathetic of the idps' household food security situation as it is now because the whole analysis done in this paper tend to reinvent the philosophy that guides the understanding of North-South politics in international relations.

Conclusion/Recommendations

From all indications, food aid politics is a big challenge in Africa's attempt to have food security and as such tends to pose as a major stumbling block in the rehabilitation project going on in Northeast Nigeria. While it could be argued that food security politics is global in nature, Africa for years has received more of its negative impacts and that goes a long way to justify the fear this paper nurses pertaining to the nexus between food aid politics and the household food security of the idps in Northeast Nigeria. Food aid in Africa, no matter what may be seen as its positive impact namely; intervening in food crisis situations for humanitarian purposes, has largely exacerbated the household food insecurity of many poor, vulnerable and displaced persons in different parts of Africa. To this end, this paper conceives food aid as being particularly pernicious since it exists largely to help sustain inefficient agricultural policies in Africa and to increase the leverage that its donors exert on the peripherized people and countries, and more so, for not only

failing to benefit the recipient adequately to compensate for these costs but for actually putting the farmers out of business leading them more especially their women and children to adopting exotic tastes that can be satisfied mainly by imports, a condition that leads them to do warranted and unwarranted things that can help them sustain the newly developed Western consumerism habit.

Based on all these, this paper recommends that governments (federal, state and local), NGOS and other participants in the rehabilitation project should avoid muddling through once grants-in-aid come, they should be more people-oriented, focused, less corrupt and result oriented. To achieve this, the aid attracted should be used efficiently and sustainably. Functional markets should be built where the former-idps on leaving the camps can sell their produce and buyers have access to the food they need. This will largely address the problem of lack of access to food. This also shall enable the government and its partners to improve meaningfully the household food security of the idps when they are resettled. In the long run, the idps should be dissuaded from relying on food aid as a capacity building means through which they hope to have long term household food security. The idps should through skill acquisition programmes organized for them by the rehabilitators be thought that food aid as a free gift has a lot of damaging consequences some of which have been raised in this paper. It has not

given sustainable household food security to any African idps and may possibly not do so in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, the chief recommendation is that while the Nigerian government must not maintain the business as usual trend, efforts should be made to put Western education at the centre of the rehabilitation project in order to create a new sense of pride in the idps that begging is psychologically low class and so erodes the self-esteem of the dependent class. What this means is that through education the idps especially the women and children should be thought how to be self-reliant through honourable means of pursuit of life endeavour while in the camp and after they had left the camp.

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