

Sustainable Development Goals and Family Well- Being: Implications for Home Economics

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Abstract

This paper reviews concept of family well-being and issues relating to that such as health, relationships, security, housing, among others. It also discusses the threats to family well-being including, poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, diseases, environmental issues, etc. it further relates the threats to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The paper, addition, examines various implications of the SDGs for Home Economics. Such implications focus on research, curriculum and innovations, gender mainstreaming, teacher preparation, professional associations and mentorship.

Key words: SDGs, Family, Well-being, Home, Economics, Threats.

Introduction

The family is the basic social unit of any society characterized by common habitation and cooperation in social and economic activities. Anyakoha (2015) sees the family as a group of persons united by tie of marriage, blood or adoption and often characterized by common residence and economic co-operation It carries out many functions that enhance the wellbeing of its members and

sustenance of society. These functions include among others, procreation (child bearing), socialization, protection, economic role, religious function and civic responsibilities. This agrees with Ezema (2001) who stated that the society ascribes socialization, economic functions, emotional support, procreation and security which are geared to their wellbeing.

Wellbeing is a general term for the condition of an individual or group of

persons in terms of their social, economic, psychological, spiritual and/or medical state. It encompasses the experience of a range of human rights and opportunities. IHC (2016), enumerated the following as domains or indicators for measuring family wellbeing: family structure, health, relationship and connections, economic security, housing, safety and environment, skills, learning and employment and finally, identity and sense of belonging. Though, what constitute family wellbeing may not be exactly the same for every family, there some basic indicators required to make a family comfortable. Indicators such as good health, good feeding, economic security, housing, safe environment, education and employment and sense of belonging. The wellbeing of the society derives from the wellbeing of different families that make up the society. The wellbeing of the family according to (Mckeown and Sweeney, 2001) is fundamentally important to the wellbeing of individuals and society. Zuna, Summers, Tunrnbull, Hu & Hu (2010), define family wellbeing as the interaction between the needs of individual member and the family as a group. Due to the important roles played by the family in the society, it therefore demands that serious attention be given to its wellbeing.

The family, according to (Anyakoha, 2013), performs

multifaceted functions in the society. It provides a special cushion and spring-board for numerous life decisions, challenges, demands and goals. This emphasizes the need to enhance the wellbeing of families. Seinfort (2005) defined wellbeing as a dynamic concept that includes subjective, social and psychological dimension as well as health related behaviours.

This is a crucial concern for Home Economics and revolves around such issues as good health, adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, enhanced income, hygienic environment among others. Pendergast (2006) stated that Home Economics focuses on demonstrated capacity to take critical, transformative, emancipatory action to enhance wellbeing and to advocate for individuals, families and communities at all levels and sectors of the society.

These wellbeing issues are however often threatened by such challenges as poverty, unemployment, household food insecurity, diseases, unhygienic environment, social insecurity, gender issues, illiteracy and poor shelter. These threats constitute the major focus and target of Sustainable Development Goals. SDGs. It therefore becomes necessary to reflect on how the SDGs relate to the issues that threaten family wellbeing (FWB) and the implications they have for Home Economics-which is a field of study that deals primarily

with the wellbeing of individuals, families and society in its entirety.

This paper therefore, focuses on the following:

1. Family wellbeing issues.
2. Threats to family wellbeing.
3. Sustainable Development Goals and threats to family wellbeing
4. Implications of Sustainable Development Goals for Home Economics.

Threats to Family Wellbeing

The family is bewildered by various threats that challenge her wellbeing. These threats, see fig 1 include but not limited to

Poverty: Poverty is marked when families lack income and resources to ensure sustenance of livelihood. This situation makes families unable to provide basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, health services and education. Poverty in families results in challenges such as hunger, malnutrition, poor housing, degrading environment, social vices and family hopelessness. All these pose as threat to family wellbeing. National Planning Commission (NPC), 2004) noted that poor parents sometimes beget poor children, thereby creating a kind of dynasty of the poor.

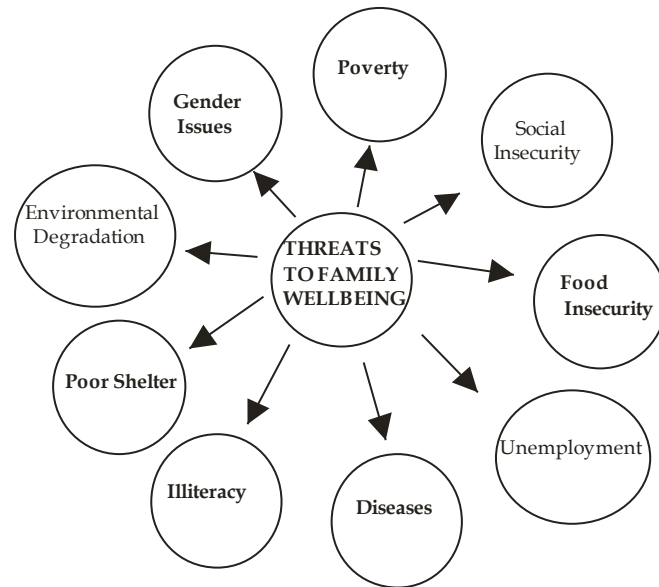


Fig. 1: Threats to family well-being

Unemployment: This has been a big threat to family wellbeing. Family members remain unemployed despite their level of education. Some become unemployed due to down sizing in some establishments, forceful retirement, to mention but a few.. This pushes some of them into menial jobs such as “keke driving”, ‘Okada riding’, street hawking, bus conducting to mention but a few, thus, in the process they join bad gangs.

Food Insecurity: Food insecurity is the inability of families to have access to the quantity and quality of food they need. This situation may lead to malnutrition, diseases such as kwashiorkor, marasmus etc. National Planning Commission (NPC) (2004) noted that the problems of hunger and malnutrition in Nigeria are more severe now than before. In their own statement, Costello, Abbas, Allen, Ball, Bells, Bellany et al (2009) noted that insecurity of food threatens food supplies in the context of rapid population growth and increasing food consumption.

Diseases: Many health challenges threaten the wellbeing of family members. Such diseases include HIV/AIDS, diabetes, a high blood pressure . The occurrence of such life threatening diseases result in encapsulation of family members or

even death. Families as a result of these diseases and their effect, on their wellbeing are faced with bathing to cope with the trauma of caring for sick members or losing them.

Environmental Degradation: Human activities affect the environment in various ways and these in turn threaten the wellbeing of the family members. Environmental pollution, flooding, constitutes threat to the wellbeing of family members. These environmental hazards can lead to sickness or even loss of lives.

Social Insecurity: Families are faced with numerous social vices that infringe on their wellbeing. Such social insecurity ranges from armed robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking, insurgencies, ritual killings, youth restiveness, terrorism, ‘419’ and displacement of people from their original residence to another place. This is in line with Macmillan and Hosking (2010), who noted that social disruption leads to forced migration of people from their homeland to a new livelihood and housing. These situations have some social and health implications. All these challenge the peace and happiness of families.

Gender Issues: Gender discrimination is a canker worm that eats deep into the wellbeing of the female gender in our society. It involves subjecting one gender to a subordinate position such

as boys preference to girls thereby making the girl child inferior. There are also some harmful traditional practices meted out on females such as early marriage, genital mutilation, widowhood rites and inheritance issues. All these challenges have implication for Home Economics, since they threaten the wellbeing of family members.

Illiteracy: The inability of one to read, write and comprehend is termed illiteracy. It entails ignorance of happenings in ones immediate and distant environment. These include, ignorance of basic services such as primary health care, safe drinking water, nutrition, housing and environmental management. All these threaten the wellbeing of family members. Ogbonna (2006) stated that education and literacy are basic needs of human development and empowerment.

Poor Shelters. Families face the challenge of not having affordable and comfortable accommodation. The high cost of rent and other attendant requirements, make it difficult for most families to rent good accommodation. This scenario pushes families to move to slums, uncompleted buildings, shanties (batchers) and living in just a room. This results in other problems as spread of diseases, attack by hoodlums

and even immoral living as exhibited by children from such families.

Economic Recession: This situation involves the reduction in the process of economic activities of a family and/ or a nation. It generates different kinds of stress or pressure on families such as loss of jobs, malnutrition, high blood pressure, high cost of living and general break down in economic system. Okoye (2017) pointed out that economic recession leads to hunger, desperation, anxiety, crimes, suicide and other deadly consequences.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): This is anything which allows people to get information, to communicate with each other or to have an effect on the environment using electronic or digital equipment. Such information can be positive or negative depending on the effect on the individual making use of the equipment. Bolstad (2004), emphasized that the use of ICT gadgets by children could foster learning in a negative sense example, solitary game play could lead to children's isolation from social interaction in learning and play. Also, violence in computer game could encourage aggressive behaviour in children. On the positive aspect of ICT, Bolstad (2004), stated that some computer games are immersive and interactive of the environment which

can provide learning benefits such as development of reasoning and problem-solving abilities, skills in making inferences and dealing with multiple sets and layers of information.

Climate Change: This occurs when there is extreme variation in weather events such as high temperature, flood etc. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) reiterated that storms, flooding, droughts and heat waves have become more frequent and severe as a result of climate change. Climate change constitute a big threat to families in various ways. It affects food supply, health and social disruption. Variations in temperature, wind and rain can affect families in diverse ways. Change in temperature can lead to some sicknesses such as meningitis in case of very high temperature, storms and flood could also dislodge families from the homes. These affect the wellbeing of families. Storms and flooding affect health through interruptions to basic services such as water and electricity supplies and indirectly through damage to property or crops. When severe, they likely threaten people's safety with children likely to be particularly vulnerable (Bunyavanich, Landrigan, McMichael & Epstein, 2003).

The Sustainable Development Goals and Challenges to Family Wellbeing.

The family is expected to grow, survive and to withstand other diverse challenges and pressure of life. Due to the diversities and complexities of life which pose challenges to the family, various governmental organisations have made numerous efforts to assuage these pressure and ensure that its impact on man is minimized to a great extent. It is in its efforts to ensure the survival of man that the United Nations introduced the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) and subsequently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015.

The SDGs also referred to as global goals were designed to go much further than the MDGs as they address the root causes of poverty and universal need for development that works for all. They were adopted by world leaders at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit held on 25th September 2015. They constitute a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, fight inequity, injustice and tackle climatic changes by the year 2030.

- **Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms. This has relevance to the wellbeing of the family because poverty threatens family wellbeing in various areas .It has a ripple effect on the family wellbeing. A poor family cannot eat well, educate her children or even seek for proper medical attention. Actualizing this

goal will mean families having enough income and resources to meet the needs of the family. This is in line with the statement of Anyakoha (2017), that poor families fail to meet their basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, health and so on.

- **Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and sustainable Agriculture. This goal has implication to families members especially on children, pregnant and nursing mothers. The effect of chronic malnutrition can be devastating on children and pregnant mothers can manifest in the next generation. This is because, pregnant women with nutritional inadequacy can pass the ill-effect of hunger and malnutrition to the unborn child. Food, Agricultural Organisation (FAO)(2003), stated that food is essential to the survival of all humans. Achieving a well fed nation means improving what people eat in terms of quantity, quality and variety. For the hungry according to (FAO,2003),it means increasing access to food so that they get enough to meet nutritional needs.
- **Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages. One of the fundamental rights of families is the attainment of good health especially the vulnerable group(women and children). This

goal is geared to ending some of the health related issues which endanger the health and wellbeing of the female gender. These issues include diseases such as HIV/AIDs, diabetes and practices such as female genital mutilation, dietary restrictions and child marriage. Some cultural practices encourage the spread of HIV . Such practices include female genital mutilation an polygamy(Ezema, 2017). Meeting women's health needs and that of other members of the family helps to ensure family wellbeing.

- **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life long learning Opportunities for all. This goal addresses making available to family members quality education which will enable them function effectively in life
- **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. This has implication for families. The issue of male preference over females both in the family and society at large has been a big problem even from name giving at birth. In the society, the male folks are placed in advantage positions over their female counter parts even when both genders have the same qualities. The implementation of this goal 5 will save women from being discriminated against and be treated

as their male counter parts. Ezema (2017), noted that in patriarchal societies, high premium is placed on male children who are expected to continue the family lineage and inherit family assets on the death of the male head of the household. Females are not accorded the same level of premium because they are expected to marry into another family.

- **Goal 6:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Access to clean and safe water is quite a challenge to many families in the world. Ensuring universal access to safe and affordable drinking water to all will no doubt improve family wellbeing amongst nations.
- **Goal 7:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. The case of affordable energy use in families has been a threat to families the cost and availability of firewood, kerosene or gas for family use has for long infringed on their wellbeing. Scarcity and high cost of these cooking energy hinder some families from preparing meal as required. Achievement of this goal will go a long way in alleviating the suffering the scarcity and high cost of these energies impose on families.
- **Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth,

full and productive employment and descent work for all. Goal 8 is relevant to the wellbeing of families especially in this present era of unemployment saga.

- **Goal 9:** Build resident infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- **Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- **Goal 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Shelter and accommodation are major threats to family wellbeing. Most families are living in sub-standard houses like batchers, uncompleted buildings and crowded rooms which affect their wellbeing.
- **Goal 12:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. This addresses the issue of environmental degradation which constitute a challenge to families.
- **Goal 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- **Goal 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystem, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt

and reserve land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

- **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Within the goals, there are 169 targeted designed to ensure the realization of the goals. For example, the targets in the goals are:

- To eradicate poverty for all people everywhere (i.e. those living on less than \$1.25/day).
- To reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to National definitions.
- To implement nationally appropriate social protection system and measures for all, including poor, and by 2030 achieve sustainable coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
- To ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic service, ownership and control over land and other forms of poverty inheritance, natural

resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including micro-finance.

- to build the residence of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and other economic, social and environmental shock and disaster.
- The core issues in the SDGs show that the agenda are road maps for all people of the world to build on the successes of the MDGs. This is to ensure sustainable social and economic advancement all over the world, the family being the building block of society.

Almost all the SDGs are relevant to the family as they touch all the challenges families are facing. Implementing and achieving the SDGs will no doubt alleviate problems faced by families, thus, enhancing their wellbeing.

Implications of Sustainable Development Goals for Home Economics

The implications and relevance of the SDGs for Home Economics cannot be over emphasized. This is vital because the main tenet of Home Economics is the wellbeing of families. Lemchi, Ezema and Iloeje (2016) noted that the central theme of Home Economics as a course is the wellbeing of individuals helping them all aim a useful and satisfying life be self reliant. They have the following implications for:

1. Research on the issues, challenges and SDGs.
2. Curriculum Innovations
3. Gender streamlining by encouraging males to enroll in Home Economics
4. Teacher preparation and competence.
5. Professional associations.
6. Mentorship.

Research on issues, challenges and SDGs: Researches should be carried out by Home Economists on the challenges facing families and at the same time evolve workable strategies that can help in alleviating these challenges threatening the wellbeing of the families. Ukoh Avionioh (2005) stressed that Home Economists should engage in series of research in order to be adequately equipped to deliver their lessons creatively and produce learners with opportunities to learn beyond the classroom.

Curriculum Innovations: Outcomes of researches avails Home Economists with information on emerging issues that can be incorporated in Home Economics curriculum. Hence, Home Economics curriculum should be beefed up with issues concerning the family which will be dealt with so as to enhance their wellbeing. Akintayo and Goriola (2013) noted that integrated Home Economics curriculum is appropriate in expressing Economics students to all aspect of family living.

Gender Mainstreaming: Males should be encouraged to enroll in Home Economics as a course. A situation where few males enroll in Home Economics is not right because Home Economics is a noble course which everybody, regardless of gender should be interested in offering. To do this, advocacy and sensitization programmes should be embarked on by Home Economics so as to let individuals be aware of the importance of Home Economics to families and society at large.

Teacher Preparation: training is needful in developing the mental capacity of an individual and this empowers the individual to impact lives. In effect, Home Economics teachers should be trained to effectively handle issues challenging the wellbeing of family members. Training given to Home Economics extension workers who are directly in contact with families outside the confined of the classroom but in the larger society brings to bear on salvaging families from their predicaments. This agrees with the statement of (Ezema, 2008) that teacher effectiveness and commitment in any area of discipline have a strong effect on the professional development of teachers.

Professional Association: Many Home Economics Professional Associations do exist in Nigeria and are working in various capacities to improve the lots of Home Economists and family members. These associations could meet in their meetings and conferences to come up with communiqué on challenges to the wellbeing of families and strategies to overcome these challenges, because according to (Pendergast, Mcgregor and Turkki (2012), Home Economics profession is an important part of the future of humankind.

Mentorship: The need for more experienced and knowledgeable Home Economists to guide the younger and inexperienced ones cannot be over emphasized. Mentoring will elevate ones professional capabilities. Developing a strong mentorship relationship gives one access to a wealth of experience. (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/work-in-progress/2011/06/18/how-to-start-a-mentorship-relationship/> retrieved 11 November 2017)

Recommendations: Based on the discussion above, the writer recommends the following.

1. Home Economists should encourage mentorship of younger ones.

2. Home Economics professional associations should be strengthened.
3. Home Economics curriculum should be constantly reviewed to keep abreast with the changing and emerging issues facing the families.
4. Government should strive to come up with workable implementing strategies for the SDGs.

Conclusion

To improve the wellbeing of family members, experienced Home Economists should be able to guide the less experienced ones so as to impart lives of family members. The SDGs is a laudable instrument fashioned out by the United Nations to ameliorate the challenges of man on earth (poverty, hunger, diseases etc) particularly to ensure family wellbeing. The family being the basic unit of the society i.e. bewildered with challenges that infringe on the realization of the basic functions entrusted on it. The SDGs address these challenges to family wellbeing. If individuals, families, Home Economists and the governments at all levels work assiduously to realize the objectives of the SDGs, the wellbeing of families will be substantially improved.

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