

Achievement of Family Well-being and Healthy Lifestyle in the Context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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Abstract

This paper focuses on family well-being and healthy lifestyle by looking at what was achieved within the period of MDGs in order to throw up the challenges facing the SDGs. The SDGs are meant to finish the job started by the MDGs. The paper further explores well-being and lifestyle determinants in the context of the MDGs and SDGs. Such issues as hunger, consumer prices, debt burden, exchange rates, unemployment, education, modern day slavery, human development index, life expectancy and corruption statistics are highlighted – all with a view to showing their present status and throwing the challenges before the 2030 agenda. Suggestions are made to address the numerous challenges facing the families.

Introduction

The Family is the basic unit of the society. One is automatically a member of a family by being born into it. The wellbeing of the society is largely determined by that of each family therein. Family plays enormous roles in the well -being and lifestyles of its members. A healthy family by implication, is inhabited by healthy and well-adjusted individuals who are ready to contribute to the growth and development of wider society and nations. Wellness is a way of life which one designs to enjoy the highest level of

health and well-being possible during the years one lives (Prentice, 1994). This entails developing oneself physically; expressing emotions effectively; having good relations with other persons; being concerned with decision-making abilities; and paying some attention to ethics, values and spirituality. These traits give rise to emotional wellness, social wellness, intellectual wellness and spiritual wellness. Wellness therefore, encompasses all dimensions of human personality. Wellness is both a relative and subjective concept and relates to lifestyle.

Lifestyle is a way of living of individuals, families (households), and societies which they manifest in coping with their physical, psychological, social, and economic environment on a day to day basis. It is expressed in both work and leisure behavior patterns, and in activities, attitudes, interests, opinions, values and allocation of income. Also it reflects peoples' image or self-concept, the way they see themselves and believe they are seen by others. Lifestyle affects health in various ways. Health is a relative state in which one is able to function well physically, mentally, socially and spiritually in order to express the full range of one's unique potentialities within the environment in which one is living. By implication, therefore, the physical, mental, social and spiritual conditions of people could fluctuate and both the internal conditions of the individual and the impact of the external environment help to define people's state of health.

Family well being and healthy lifestyles are thus very important issues that need to be achieved in the society. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have enormous relevance to the family and its wellbeing. It is necessary to highlight the goals and intensions of the MDGs and the SDGs with a view to

revealing their relationship and then locate well-being and healthy lifestyle.

This paper thus focuses on:

- The Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Wellbeing and Healthy Lifestyle determinants in context of MDGs and SDGs
- Family well-being and SDGs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

It is actually difficult, if not impossible to discuss the SDGs without reference to MDGs. The United Nation (2006) made it clear that the SDGs are to finish the job that the MDGs started. This means that the SDGs are taking over from where the MDGs stopped. It is therefore logical to shed light on the MDGs before taking up the SDGs. This is necessary in this paper since according to the United Nations, all the MDGs influence health and health influence all the MDGs.

The MDGs is a child born out of necessity. The issue of extreme poverty as well as abysmally low level of development in many parts of the world plus some other challenges actually gave impetus to the conception of the MDGs as a global action to address the situations in order to stimulate development. The United

Nations convened the Millennium Summit on September 2000 which produced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the deadline of 2015 was set for their achievement. According to the United Nations (2006), the United Nations Millennium Declaration signed in September 2000 commits world leaders of all 191 UN member states (Nigeria inclusive) to take action to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. The point remains that better result is expected when member nations of the UN work together than when the individual states work in isolation. The MDGs have specific targets and indicators which are captured under eight sub-headings as follows:

1. To eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.
2. To achieve universal primary education.
3. To promote gender equality and empower women.
4. To reduce child mortality.
5. To improve maternal health.
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. To ensure environmental sustainability
8. To develop a global partnership for development.

The above goals are intended to direct development efforts globally from the inception in 2000 till 2015. All the targets have far reaching implications for the health and well-being of the family and by extension, the society at large. The burden of each target ultimately gets back to the family. Family is a microcosm of the society as well as its mirror and as such, whatever affects the family reflects in the wider society. No society can claim to be healthier than the health status of the constituent families. The extent to which the health and well-being of the families is achieved, to that extent the MDGs will claim to have succeeded and to that extent development would have been achieved.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

It is logical and sound practice to follow up at the end of a set time-frame for a program such as the MDGs. The deadline set for the realization of the MDG targets ended in 2015 and the need to follow up made the United Nations to articulate another set of targets called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The notion is for SDGs to finish the job that MDGs started.

The idea of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was conceived at the United Nations Conference, Rio +20, in 2012 and the

objective was to produce a set of universally applicable goals that balance the three dimensions of Sustainable Development namely: environmental, social and economic (United Nations, 2015). Based on the outcome of this conference, the world leaders gathered on the 25th of September at the United Nations in New York to adopt the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda comprises 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals are to:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunity for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy for all.
8. Promote sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable

industrialization and foster innovation.

10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peace and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development.

A very close look at the SDGs, no doubt, reveals the very close relationship with the MDGs. The SDGs are, so to say, amplification of the MDGs pointing to the intension of the United Nations for the SDGs to finish the job started by the MDGs. The SDGs

point towards reconciling the issues of economic development necessary for higher standard of living with that of enhancing the challenges thrown up by the environment.

Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the need of the future generations (Brundtland Commission, 1987). Sustainable Development, according to Pearce, Makanda and Barbier (1989), involves designing a social and economic system which ensures that rise in real income is sustained, educational standards increase, the health of nation improves and the general quality of life is advanced. It is important to realize that the man whose income and standard of education should improve is, first and foremost, member of a family. The individuals from the families make up the nation. Therefore any efforts to achieve development in any nation should logically start with enhancing the health and well-being of the people in the families. Development does not just happen. It is healthy people alone who can drive reasonable development.

Well-being and Healthy Lifestyle Determinants in the Context of the MDGs and SDGs

The targets of MDGs and SDGs are clear. The MDGs have done their bits and the SDGs have taken over. The

framework of wellness and lifestyle had also been fully explored. It is, necessary to take a look at some pointers that could define wellness and lifestyle in order to see the much MDGs could do and the quantum of challenges waiting for the SDGs to take up. The points had been made that all MDGs influence health and health influence all MDGs. Also it has been stated that the SDGs are actually intended to finish the job that MDGs started. The MDGs were a 15-year agenda which ended in 2015 and now the 2030 agenda, otherwise called the SDGs have taken over to finish what could not be accomplished within the MDG time period. It is, therefore, timely to highlight some conditions which impact significantly on the well-being and lifestyle of people and imperatively on overall development. These pointers or determinants include the following, among others:

Hunger Statistics: Hunger statistics, current reports from World Food Programme (2016) stated as follows:

- Some 795 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy life. This figure represents about one in every nine people on earth.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest prevalence (percentage of population) of

hunger. One person in four there is undernourished.

- Poor nutrition causes nearly half (45%) of deaths in children under five and this represents about 3.1 million children each year.
- One out of six children (roughly 100 million) in developing countries is underweight.
- 66 million primary school-aged children attend classes hungry across the developing world with 23 million in Africa alone.

The World Health Organization (WHO) noted thus:

- 800 million people go to bed hungry.
- As at 2001, 1.1 billion people had consumption levels below \$1 a day and 2.7 billion lived on less than \$2 a day.
- One third of deaths - some 18 million people a year or 50,000 per day are due to poverty related causes.

In Nigeria, the following reports indicate the hunger situation:

- NAIJ.com, an online news platform reported the UN humanitarian coordinator for Nigeria, Mohammed Safieldin to have disclosed on Monday June 27, 2016 that if nothing is done to scale up interventions for food and medicare to refugees in

IDP camps, 5 children may be lost every hour.

- Recently, the Medical and Humanitarian Organization Medecins Sana Frontiers issued a statement saying that 24,000 refugees are in poor health with at least 30 people, mostly children, dying every day.
- The UN disclosed that over 200,000 people, mostly children, are at risk of dying from malnutrition in Borno State alone (NAIJ.com Retrieved 23/07/2016).

Obinna and Efeunu (2016) in the *Vanguard News* online of 23 August 2016 affirmed that some of the problems in Borno State include acute malnutrition. In this same report, WHO estimated the rate of severe malnutrition to be 14%.

The situation in Nigeria today does not seem to be improving, rather things are getting worse every day. The prices of food stuff are beyond the reach of many families.

Debt Burden: The Sun News of 24 February 2015 bears the report of Nigeria external debt to World Bank, African Development Bank (AFDB) and others to have hit N1.63 trillion.

The combined effect of hunger, inflation, very high exchange rates and debt burden on the well-being and

lifestyle of members of any family should better be imagined than experienced. The psychological, physiological, social, physical and economic disposition of people are affected. People feel most uncomfortable, growth is stunted, intelligence is stifled, emotional equilibrium is destabilized, body immunity is lowered and clear thinking and overall sensibility of people are affected.

Unemployment: This is a topical issue worldwide. Golden (2016) reported the global situation thus:

- One in four young people cannot find work for more than \$1.25 per day.
- 248 million youths not in education employment training.
- Youth unemployment rate is up to four times higher than the adult unemployment rate.
- Large number of youths enters job market every year.
- There is lack of employment opportunities, particularly in poorer economies.
- There is low quality of education and training without clear link to labor markets.
- Access to finance and infrastructure remains significant barrier to small-scale and micro-enterprise growth and job creation.

The National Bureau of Statistics (2016) reported that the unemployment rate as at March quarter of 2016 stood at 12.1 percent up from 10.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2015 and the number of unemployed persons rose by 18 percent to 9.485 million. Also youth unemployment increased to 21.5 percent from 19 percent. Youth restiveness, insurgency, armed robbery, kidnapping, raping and numerous other vices have all been attributed largely to unemployment. Goldin (2016) noted that unemployment impact matters beyond economics such as identity and social cohesion. Surely, these activities detract so much from what is expected from a well-adjusted individual. This raises the critical question of how effective the families are discharging their natural and assigned roles especially with respect to child upbringing. What factors are responsible for the present experiences in the Nigerian society? How relevant are the curricular at the various levels of education in the country? What policies are the government putting in place to address the unemployment question?

Education Statistics: A look at school attendance aspect of education statistics in Nigeria may go a long way in revealing a lot about the situation in the country.

Nairaland Forum (2015) reported as follows:

-North East	have	56.75%
Uneducated Males,		61.1%
Uneducated Females,		56.75%
illiterate and	43.25%	Youth population
-North West	have	46.9%
Uneducated Males,		62.8%
Uneducated Females,		54.85%
illiterate and	45.15%	Youth Population
-North Central	have	22.6%
Uneducated Males,		38.0%
Uneducated Females,		30.3%
illiterate and	69.70 %	Youth Population
-South East	have	10.70%
Uneducated Males,		18.70%
Uneducated Females,		14.70%
illiterate and	85.30%	Youth population
-South West	have	11.6%
Uneducated Males,		17.1%
Uneducated Females,		14.35%
Illiterate and	85.65%	Youth population
-South South	have	6.1%
Uneducated Males,		13.0%
Uneducated Females,		9.55%
Illiterate and	90.45%	Youth Population

Source: Nairaland Forum. Released 9 August 2015

The statistics raise some vital questions:

- Who is going to school in Nigeria?
- Why are “they” not going to school?

- What is the government doing to improve school attendance?
- What has been the impact of not going to school on the various families and the Nigerian society?
- What factors could be held responsible for the disparity in the male and female attendance to schools?

Modern Day Slavery Statistics:

Modern day slavery is one evil practice which many may have been underestimating its impact on human and societal development. Lawal (2016) characterized modern day slavery as human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and commercial sex exploitation. Kidnapping is also a form of slavery.

In a survey by Walk Free Foundation on global slavery index reported by Lawal (2016), Nigeria ranked 23rd out of 167 most populous countries studied. North Korea ranked first with 4.37% of its population estimated to be enslaved. Uzbekistan is next with 3.97% followed by Cambodia with 1.65%. In terms of number, the following results were revealed in rank order. India 18.35, China 3.39, Pakistan 2.13, Bangladesh 1.53 and Uzbekistan 1.23 (The Nation News Online 23 August 2016)

According to the above report, these countries alone account for 58%

of world's enslaved people translating to 26.6 million enslaved people. The report, pathetically noted that in the countries with the highest prevalence, the governments have failed to pay attention to the general well-being of the citizens.

Human Development Index (HDI):

This is an index for potential human development. Human capital is an important factor for wealth of a nation due to its influence on overall production of the country. In calculating the HDI, life expectancy education and income per capita are all considered and the index ranges from zero to one. A country scores higher HDI when life expectancy at birth is longer, the education period is longer and the income per capita is higher. HDI is used to distinguish whether a country is developed, developing or underdeveloped is categorized into four levels:

- Very High Human Development
- High Human Development
- Medium Human Development
- Low Human Development

The United Nations (2015) ranked countries in HDI based on the above categorization. The current report on HDI which was launched in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 4th December 2015 revealed as follows:

- No African country made it to both Very High Human Development and the High Human Development lists.
- Ten African countries made it to the Medium Human Development list and Nigeria is not there.

Nigeria and many other African countries, are among countries with Low Human Development Index.

Life Expectancy: This is a critical factor in Human Development index. The WHO (2015) reported that there is worldwide increase in life expectancy by five years with African countries seeing the biggest improvement, even though Nigeria is among the seven countries with the lowest scores. The Nigerian average for men and women is 54.5 years (men 53.4 and women 55.6). The WHO (2015) presented the Nigeria Life Expectancy History as follows:

- 1960, Male 37.2, Female 40.3, All 38.7 and world rank all 153
- 1970. Male 40.6, Female 43.7, All 42.1 and world rank all 158
- 1980, Male 43.8, Female 46.9, All 45.3 and world rank all 159
- 1990, Male 46.0, Female 48.6, All 47.2 and world rank all 170
- 2000, Male 46.1, Female 47.8, All 46.9 and world rank all 169
- 2010, Male 51.2, Female 52.9, All 52.0 and world rank all 176

-2015, Male 53.4, Female 55.6, All 54.5 and world rank all 176

Source: WHO (2015). *Nigeria: Life Expectancy History*

Corruption Statistics: Corruption is one phenomenon that is topical and pervasive all over the world today. According to Dicker and Boyer (2016) corruption lingers at the core of many of the world's underdeveloped nations. Corruption is so bad that when one fights corruption, it fights back. On the corruption perception study for 2015 conducted by Transparency International, Nigeria scored 26 point out of 100. The score is based on a scale ranging from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). In the 2015 ranking of least corrupt countries, Nigeria secured the 120th position out of 150 countries investigated in the World Democracy Audit. In the ranking of the 10 most corrupt countries published on February 11, 2016 by Dicker and Boyer (2016), Nigeria came first among 60 countries evaluated.

Family Well-being and the SDGs: Challenging the Challenges

The exposition so far, no doubt, has thrown up some challenges. While writing on "Youth Paving the Road to 2030" Goldin (2016) noted that the size of the challenge is enormous and the complexity of the challenge is daunting, the challenges need to be addressed

head on. The following are offered as the way out:

- Hunger is a major factor in family well-being. The various countries should take the issue of food production, processing and preservation very seriously. Serious emphasis should be placed on development of food value chain to achieve food security. This will also help in bringing down commodity prices. Individuals should also farm even around their houses. Serious emphasis should be placed on family farming campaign. The impact this could make should not be underestimated.
- Unemployment presents a big threat to family well-being. This has direct bearing on youth restiveness. The various governments should emphasize and support development of small and medium scale industries to create employment. Many big industries are folding up and some multinational industries are pulling out. The government should invite all these players to a dialogue to identify their problems and work out action plans to revitalize the industries to create employment.
- The government should accord education the highest priority in the national budgets since education has been identified as the most powerful weapon to change the world. Strict

compliance should be ensured in the implementation.

- Governments of the world should identify all forms of modern day slavery within their territories and come up with appropriate legal framework to deal with this evil. There must also be collaboration among the nations of the world to fight this retrogressive trend.
- Corruption constitutes the greatest setback to development. Adequate legal framework should be put in place to ensure successful prosecution and punishment of offenders. There should be thorough investigation of cases before prosecution. It is only when the offenders are severely punished that people could be deterred.
- To address the very high exchange rate and run-away inflation, world renowned economists should always be involved in the management of every country's economy.
- Sanitation laws of every country should be updated, strengthened and enforced to address the various sanitation elements. Appropriate sanctions should be meted out on the offenders. Also sanitary inspectors that could visit peoples' homes, even unannounced should be reinstated. Effective sanitation will reduce diseases and improve life expectancy.
- The various governments should provide adequate Maternal and Child Health facilities, especially in the rural areas. There should be serious and aggressive campaign to get child-bearing women to use the facilities. Well trained staff in this area should be employed to man the facilities. These staff should be given in-service training frequently to update their knowledge and skills.
- On the debt burden, the governments, especially those of the developing and underdeveloped countries should do all that is necessary to develop their economies. This way, they are able to generate enough income to meet their needs instead of borrowing and consequently putting their countries in bondage.
- Governments at the national, regional and zonal levels should identify their peculiar barriers to school attendance and deal with them.
- The governments all over the world should develop a comprehensive master plan for developing of the transport sub-sector and strictly adhere to its implementation. This will go a long way in reducing the stress associated with transportation and travels especially in Nigeria.
- Finally everything in Nigeria, human beings, animals eg cattle, and even material things need to be

reformatted. This should be so since everything-our values, morals and sensibility seem to have gone bizarre.

Conclusion

The MDGs which terminated in 2015 made positive impact in certain areas of development and still very much remains to be done especially in the developing and underdeveloped nations. Many families today are still grappling with the basic and critical issues such as hunger and unemployment. To this extent, therefore, the SDGs are faced with numerous complex and daunting challenges. The whole world is waiting to see what the SDGs could achieve between now and 2030.

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