

Promotion of Responsible Consumption for Family Survival: Role of Home Economics

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Abstract

Families need to consume goods and services in various ways and dimensions in order to survive. This consumption has to be responsible and based on decisions that take cognisance of sustainable development. This is a serious concern for Home Economics which is a family-oriented and multidisciplinary field of study. This paper examined this concern. It presents an overview of the SDGs, discusses Goal 12 which focuses on responsible consumption and development. It also identifies ways of promoting responsible consumption. These ways include, among others, promoting sustainability literacy; changing consumer behaviour and promoting high involvement by industry. It further deals with role of Home Economics in promoting responsible consumption. The role encapsulates research on responsible consumption, awareness creation, teaching consumer education, among others. Eight recommendations for promoting responsible consumption were made. These include, among others, Home economics practitioners should acquaint themselves with the content. Sustainable Development Goal 12, responsible consumption. The paper makes seven recommendations for promoting responsible consumption.

Keywords: Responsible, Consumption, Family, Survival, Sustainable, Development, Goals.

Introduction

The family is a consuming unit. It consumes vital goods and services in order to survive. Preponderance of such goods and services abound in the society. Families need to consume available goods and services with caution as some of them could be inappropriate for human consumption.

Consumption has to be responsible and be based on informed decisions that take into cognisance sustainable development. This is done by ensuring that the current consumption does not jeopardise the ability of future generations to meet their consumption needs. Such consumption would require that consumers be well informed about

their rights and responsibilities, the threats and opportunities of the emerging technologies. Responsible consumption is so important that it features prominently in the Sustainable Development (SDGs) as Goal 12.

Since Home Economics is primarily concerned with family wellbeing, evolving ways of promoting survival becomes a crucial concern for Home Economics. Home Economics is a multidisciplinary and an evolving field of study that according to Pendergast (2008) deals with the relationship between individuals, families, communities, and environment in which they live in. It draws from a range of disciplines to promote optimal and sustainable living for individual, families and communities. It teaches peoples of all gender important life skills for management.

This paper focuses on promotion of responsible consumption for living survival. It covers

- ❖ a review of the SDGs
- ❖ major targets of Goal 12
- ❖ ways of promoting responsible consumption.
- ❖ role of Home Economics in promoting responsible consumption.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The sustainable development goals offer a vision of fairer, more prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world where no one is left behind. The sustainable development goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the 2030. The SDGs include:

- ❖ No poverty
- ❖ Zero Hunger
- ❖ Good health and well being
- ❖ Quality education
- ❖ Gender Equality
- ❖ Clean water and sanitation
- ❖ Affordable and clean Energy
- ❖ Decent work and Economics Growth
- ❖ Industry innovation and infrastructure
- ❖ Reducing Inequality
- ❖ Sustainable Cities and Communities
- ❖ Responsible consumption and production
- ❖ Climate action
- ❖ Life below water
- ❖ Life on land
- ❖ Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- ❖ Partnership to achieve the goals

These goals are broad based and interdependent. They all have a list of targets that are measured with indicators. Looking at the 17 SDGs the SDGs goal 12 which is Responsible Consumption and Production is the one that relates to this paper. It basically encourages industries, business and consumers to recycle and reduce waste.

Responsible Consumption can be seen as a transition to sustainable consumption and production of goods and services. It is required to reduce the negative impact on the climate and environment, and people's health.

- ❖ Developing countries are greatly affected by climate change and other environmental impacts, which lead to increased poverty and reduced prosperity.
- ❖ It involves using resources to affect the ecosystem and reducing the impact of dangerous chemicals in order to ensure not only

environmental benefits but also social and economic benefits.

SDGs Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

CSR and Sustainable development Commitments Media Platform (2019) defined responsible consumption as a way of consumption that is beneficial to the economy, it has a positive impact on society and acknowledges the impact of products' different stages. It is beneficial to the economy as it allows goods and services to be traded, benefitting the agents involved in the trade. It has a positive impact on society as the products or services are linked to a workforce that has fair wages, working conditions and they are also positive goods or services for the buyers such as health. It also acknowledges the impacts associated with products' different stages (from its production, transportation and disposal) and tries to buy the ones with a lower impact (United Nations, 2019).

Responsible consumption means being mindful about what, how and how much is produced and consumed so that the earth resources are used judiciously and are preserved for future generations. It is important because human being's exert extreme stress on the planet and its resources. (Lama, 2018)

The consumer is an individual who pays some amount of money or the thing required to consumer goods and services produced. She/he could also be a person or organization that use or consumes economic service or commodities (Wikipedia, 2019).

SDGs Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production is geared toward achieving economic growth and sustainable development by reducing ecological food print that is changing the way we produce and consume goods and services. Noting that Agriculture is the biggest user of water worldwide, and irrigation now claims about 70% of all freshwater for human use. The efficient management of our shared natural resources, and the way we dispose of toxic waste and pollutants, are important targets, to achieve the goal. Encouraging industries, businesses and consumers to recycle and reduce waste is important, as is supporting developing countries to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption by 2030.

It also states that a large share of the world population is still consuming far too little to meet even their basic needs. Halving per capital of global food waste at the retailer and consumer levels is also important for creating, more efficient production and supply chain. This can help with food security, and shift us towards a more resource efficient economy

SDGs Goal 12 is important because it underpins every other sustainable Development Goal, from zero poverty to peace and justice. Its idea creates lots of resistance since it poses a significant threat to the status-quo despite being a great social environmental and economic opportunity. People must now look for ways of doing better and more with less. It is vital to note that particular SDGs cover the consumers and business sectors, and also basic services supply chains. Better jobs and

an improved life quality for all (MDG Monitor, 2016).

Going further it stated that the key proposal of SDGs 12 is to reduce the inequality associated with the utilization of essential natural resources. Developed nations are asked to lead the way in adopting sustainable consumption and production practices. In effects it will be possible to enhance the livelihoods. For example, reducing food waste may have an effect on lowering worldwide food prices thus benefitting the poor, improving the purchasing power of poor people must ideally be changed with increased sustainable consumption awareness.

It simply looks at a global population with deteriorating natural resources and increased urbanization which implies that more people to feed with less water, farmland and rural labour. To achieve the expected increases in water, energy and food needs means shifting to more sustainable production and consumption approaches. Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2019).

Major Targets of SDGs Goal 12

The major target of SDGs Goal 12 as stated will, require essential change on how the society operate, including issues relating to livelihood. It involves a collective societal transformation. Proposed targets for SDGs Goal 12 are to:

- successfully implement the proposed 10-years guideline of programs on sustainable production and

consumption, with every country taking action to their best capacity.

- achieve the efficient use and sustainable management of all-natural resources by 2030.
- reduce universal food waste in the consumer and retail levels and also lessen food losses in supply chains and production, including losses related to-harvesting.
- achieve the eco- friendly management of chemical waste throughout its life cycle, based on determined global frameworks, and considerably reduce their pollution of soil, water, and air to reduce their negative effects on our environment and human health.
- profoundly lower the generation of waste through recycling, reuse prevention and reduction.
- encourage companies, particularly large transnational organizations to use sustainable practices like integrating sustainability data in their reports.
- promote sustainable public procurement policies in line with national priorities and policies.
- Ensure that everyone in the world has awareness and relevant knowledge of sustainable lifestyles as well as development in agreement with nature.
- support developing nations to increase their technological and scientific capacity so as to start moving towards sustainable production and consumption patterns.
- develop and adopt tools for monitoring effects of sustainable development for a more sustainable tourism, which creates employment

opportunities and promotes the local products and culture.

- Streamline inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels that promotes wasteful consumption through eliminating market distortions based on the national context, through phasing out the harmful subsidies and restructuring taxation.

SDGs Goal12 seeks to open a new world to humankind, where not just a few people undertake sustainable consumption, but when reducing, reusing preventing and recycling will be common for everyone. The effects of such a sustainable lifestyle go beyond preserving the earth's natural resources as it can help in reducing the increasing widening gap between the rich and the poor (MDG Monitor, 2016).

Ways Promoting of Responsible Consumption for Family Survival

Responsible consumption for sustainable family survival could be promoted in the following ways:

Promoting Sustainability Literacy: This can be described as the knowledge, skill and mindset that allow individuals to become deeply committed to building a sustainable future and assisting, in making informed and effective decision. It is a way of raising awareness and assessing Sustainable literacy on SDGs 12. Today's complex problems require solution based on the integration of social quality, ecological integrity and economic systems. According to Awuzia (2019), higher education institutions play a salient role in shaping the attitude and disposition of graduates towards sustainable

aspirations. He goes further to say that this makes it imperative that these institutions adopt Sustainability tenet as a common thread across the entirety of their activities- research, teaching and learning as well as other operational facets. Such integration will lead to further enlightenment and knowledge concerning sustainable development among members of the higher educational institution. More sustainable ways of operation in Home Economics should be introduced and taught to families to help them adopt responsible consumption patterns.

Convening Partnership for Sustainable Development: This is to cover gaps and create a more coherent response at scale by pooling expertise and assets across United Nations entities. Success partnership for SDGs Goal 12 will necessarily include industries to achieve target through wide scale implementation on the supply side.

Changing consumer behaviour: This is very important. It helps people to adapt new methods of doings things, their operations, and overall business. They are very relevant in the overall operation of how human and material resources are employed, how consumer preferences and how markets are shaped or designed.

Promoting High Involvement / Commitment by Industry: Here the industry should be interested in eradicating pollution of water, air and land on which people/ communities depend, especially those in slums, and

poverty particularly with regard to chemicals and waste management.

Creating Joint Awareness Creation and Capacity Development: It is necessary to create enhanced awareness of responsible consumption among all stakeholders.

Evolving integrated policy- making and implementation at the national level: This can be done to ensure responsible consumption.

Promoting advocacy for corporate responsibility: This calls for joint campaigns calling out businesses with unsustainable practices.

Being committed to the SDGs: All stakeholders need to stay in touch with the global goals (The Global Goals, 2019).

Financing the shift: There is the need to finance a shift or movement to sustainable consumption and production. Sustainable finances, coupled with capacity building, to ensure inclusiveness and equity, identify and address other outstanding issues and string to achieve the relevant SDGs Goal 12 targets.

Focusing on supply chain: It is also necessary to focus on supply chain, involving everyone from producer to final consumer. This requires educating consumer on sustainable consumption and life styles, providing them with adequate information through standards and labels and engaging in sustainable activities.

Other consumer education related ways of promoting responsible consumption include:

- ❖ Shop, eat and drink locally supporting neighbourhood business keeps people employed and circulate money back into your community.
- ❖ Be conscious of packaging – the less the better
- ❖ Buy from companies you know have Sustainable practices and don't harm the environment.
- ❖ Decrease the amount of food waste you produce through planning and preparation of the exact quantity of food you can eat.
- ❖ Choose reusable products. Use an eco-bag for shopping, a reusable water bottle or a cup to reduce your plastic waste.

Role of Home Economics in Promoting Responsible Consumption for Family Survival

Informed and responsible consumption is vital for family survival. Home Economics is a multidisciplinary family-oriented field which is continually evolving new ways of enabling family enhance their survival (Anaykoha 2013). Thus, the promotion of responsible consumption which the SDGs emphasise, among other things, should be an important concern for Home Economics and the practitioners. They should respond to this concern in as many ways as possible, including but not limited to:

Research: Home Economic research should focus on all issues relating to family, including the issues relating to responsible consumption for families. Findings from such research should be

used for advocacy, also inform relevant curriculum, practices, etc.

Awareness creation: Home Economics programmes, teaching, workshops, seminars, etc, should promote awareness for individuals families and communities on responsible consumption practices.

Consumer education: Home Economics education programmes at various levels of education should promoted sound consumer education.

Teaching responsible consumption: This concept and related practices should be emphasized in teaching all aspects of Home Economics at all levels of education.

Conclusion

Responsible consumption is very important for family survival. It also has positive influence on the environment and economy. Since it relates to the family, it is a serious concern for Home Economics. There is need to evolve ways of promoting responsible consumption. This paper has discussed issues relating to responsible consumption for family survival. It covers a review of the SDGs, major targets of Goal 12, and ways of promoting responsible consumption. It further enumerated some of the roles of Home Economics in promoting responsible consumption

Recommendations

To ensure promotion of responsible consumption; the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ Home economics practitioners should acquaint themselves with the content, substance of the Sustainable

Development Goal 12 which deals with responsible consumption and production.

- ❖ There should be frantic effort to achieve the stated targets of Goal 12.
- ❖ Home Economics curriculum at all levels should emphasize responsible consumption, along other things.
- ❖ More research work on issues of responsible consumption and production as it affects energy, waste and pollution management in the homes and communities, should be encouraged.
- ❖ Home economics professional development programmes /seminars, workshops should be regularly organised on issues of sustainability, responsible consumption and family survival.
- ❖ A responsible consumer should try to avoid as much waste as possible. In doing so, one is likely to favour a more ecologically friendly consumption of food.
- ❖ Consumers should be conscious of the fact that daily purchases have impact on the environment and be mindful of this impact when making purchasing.

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