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Food Insecurity and Malnutrition of Africa: A Combined Attempt Can Reduce Them

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Abstract: *In the 21st century Africa is at the top levels of hunger and malnutrition in the world that is unharmonious with the vision of the African Union. Hunger and malnutrition are a common matters in almost all African countries and recently it is appeared to be increasing in most of the countries of the continent. The security of food and nutrition is a fundamental right of every people. But many people of Africa are deprived of this right. About one-third of African children are undersized in their growth and suffer from various physical and mental complexities. The UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) no.2 aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition globally by 2030, but Africa is off track. It is estimated that about 200 million people in Africa are undernourished. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the African food and nutrition security system in the long term. The pandemic has thrown the continent into serious uncertainty about the implementation of SDG 2. Food production in this continent should be increased proportional to the increased population. This study tries to discuss the food and nutrition situation of Africa and provides a constructive guideline to overcome it.*

Keywords: Africa, COVID-19 pandemic, food security, hunger, nutrition

JEL Codes: I14, I31, N57, P36, Q01, Q18

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1. Introduction

The African continent has 54 countries, nine territories, and two independent states with limited or no recognition. In 2021, the population of Africa becomes 1.38 billion and it is expected the figure will grow to 1.71 billion by 2030. Africa has a very young population, with about 41% under 15 years and about 19% in the 15-24 years range. Food production should be increased proportional to the increased population and it will be challenging to make this reality for this continent. Consumers tend toward cheaper and less nutritious foods when they have lower incomes [UN, 2019].

Hunger and malnutrition are common situations in every developing country [Ecker & Nene, 2012]. United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000) confidently provided, “Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and the fear of violence, oppression or injustice” [Benson, 2020]. In 2015, UN food agencies recommended that the eradication of poverty and hunger in all low and middle-income

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countries would be possible by 2030. To achieve this goal every nation should work in collaboration and along with social protection combined with public and private efforts are necessary to elevate investment levels in productive sectors [McGuire, 2015]. The security of food and nutrition is a fundamental right of every people. Many people of Africa are deprived of this right and unable to live a healthy life in society. Most of the poorest countries in the world are in Africa. The main cause of mortality and morbidity in Africa is food insecurity and malnutrition [FAO et al., 2018].

More than half of the world's undernourished people are found in Asia (about 418 million), more than one-third in Africa (about 282 million), and 60 million in Latin America and the Caribbean. The world has committed to the goal of ending hunger, food insecurity, and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. But it is confirmed that hunger will not be eradicated by 2030 unless any miracle happens. If recent movements continue, the number of people affected by hunger would exceed 840 million by 2030 [FAO et al., 2021]. On the other hand, overweight and obesity rates for children continue to increase in most African countries, whereas the rates for adults are increasing in all regions [FAO, 2017]. Overweight affected about 4.7% (9.3 million) children under-5 in Africa in 2019. More than nine out of ten children live with stunting and wasting in Africa and Asia. On the other hand, more than seven out of ten children are affected by overweight worldwide. More than 30% of women in Africa and Asia were affected by anemia [FAO et al., 2021]. Adult overweight and obesity rates (12.8%) have risen dramatically in many African countries, which increases the risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases later in life. In 2019, stunting children under-5 was about 29.1% (57.5 million) in Africa. About 40% of all stunted children in the world live in Africa [UN, 2021].

Conflicts, wars, and insurgencies have increased hunger and food insecurity in many African countries. For example, in Africa; Somalia, South Sudan, Chad, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have very high child undernourishment and under-5 mortality rates compared to stable nations [Otegunrin et al., 2020]. Drought, floods, war and political conflict, poor governance and state fragility, increasing inequality, weak economic development, economic downturns, climate change, and biodegradation are common problems in most African countries. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic is added to these hindrances [Atukunda et al., 2021].

It is estimated that about 200 million people in Africa are undernourished, and the figure is increasing gradually. Undernourishment among the common people of Africa was 19.1% in 2019 and it is expected to increase the figure 25.7% by 2030. Improvements in child stunting of under-5 are very slow and different in different regions, such as in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) prevalence rate was 31%, and in Eastern Africa, it was 34% in 2019. The UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition globally by 2030, but Africa is off track [Atukunda et al., 2021]. About one-third of African children are undersized in their growth and suffer from various physical and mental complexities; 33% in Sub-Saharan Africans (SSAs). Their per capita calorie intake is below the recommended intake level of 2,100 Kcal and in some very poorest countries, such as Burundi, Eritrea, DR Congo, and Somalia calorie availability is below the minimum intake level of 1,800 Kcal [Benson, 2020]. Agriculture is the main source of the economies in almost all African countries. Crop production, animal husbandry, fisheries, and forestry are major agricultural products of this continent that contributes \$310 billion to Sub-Saharan African GDP. Africa spends more than \$60 billion per year to import food (cereals account for about \$25 billion, meat and dairy for \$8 billion, the sugar sector \$4 billion, and the vegetable oil sector \$9 billion per year) [Baumüller et al., 2020].

In 2017, about 821 million people in the world were suffering from malnutrition. In 2020, about 690 million people (8.9%) of the world are hungry and more than 10 million people are added every year. An estimated 2 billion people in the world did not have regular access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food in 2019. In 2019, about 21.3% (144.0 million) of children under-5 were stunted, 6.9% (47.0 million) wasted, and 5.6% (38.3 million) overweight in the world. It is conjecture that 83 to 132 million more undernourished people will add to the total number due to COVID-19 pandemic [FAO et al., 2020].

Many attempts are taken to combat hunger and malnutrition in Africa at national and international levels. First of all, every country in the continent needs economic development. All African countries have taken various attempts for the improvement of nutrition within 2025 by the World Health Assembly in 2011 as; i) 40% reduction of the number of stunted African children under-5, ii) 50% reduction of anemia in women of child-bearing age in Africa, iii) 30% reduction of low birth weight in Africa, iv) no increase of overweight in African children under-5, v) increase exclusive



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breastfeeding rates during the first six months in Africa to at least 50%, and vi) reduce and maintain childhood wasting in Africa to less than 5% [African Union, 2015]. At present, the prevalence of wasting children under-5 in the African region is 6.4% (12.7 million) and it is expected that it will be 3% by 2030. On the other hand, 27% of all wasted children in the world live in Africa [FAO, 2020]. Despite challenges, many African countries have significantly improved in reducing stunting, wasting, and being underweight among under-5 children [Annan, 2018]. The rate of poverty in Africa has declined from 54% in 1990 to 41% in 2015; the number of poor people has increased from 278 million to 413 million during the same period due to high population growth [WB, 2019].

2. Literature Review

Todd Benson has tried to discuss food and nutrition insecurity in Africa. He shows that malnutrition is the main cause of about 28% of all deaths in Africa (about 2.9 million). Hence, nutrition security is the main concern of any national development. To end hunger in Africa by 2050, it must attain a 3.5% annual average growth rate in per capita GDP [Benson, 2020]. Tadesse Kuma and his coauthors have examined the effects of coffee production on household food security in Ethiopia for commercialization, improved household dietary diversity, and food security [Kuma et al., 2018]. Justus Ochieng and his coauthors have analyzed the impact of the commercialization of bananas and legumes on dietary diversity in central Africa [Ochieng et al., 2019]. Multidimensional poverty is constructed using four dimensions of poverty, such as health, education, living standards, and economic activity, South Africa are declined from 17.9% in 2001 to 7% in 2016. According to the General Household Survey (GHS) of South Africa in 2017, about 6.8 million people experienced hunger but this figure was 13.2 million in 2002 and 10.4 million people had inadequate access to food and in 2015 about 25.2% of the population was living below a food poverty line [Stats SA, 2019]. Simeon Ehui and his coauthors have investigated the challenges and opportunities for meeting the food security of the poor vulnerable groups and have examined policy strategies to achieve future food security in SSA [Ehui et al., 2002].

Stuart Gillespie and his coauthors have realized that almost a quarter of all children in the world under-5 are stunted and also overweight and obesity prevalence increases rapidly in every country in the world. They confirm that Africa and Asia collectively share the largest numbers of all forms of malnutrition [Gillespie et al., 2021]. Ulrike Grote and her coauthors have examined the case of wheat and maize value chains and their contribution to food security in Africa and Asia. They have identified drivers transforming food systems and applied them to the cereal value chains and disentangle their effects on food security [Grote et al., 2021].

Prudence Atukunda and her coauthors have highlighted Africa's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. The UN SDG 2 ('Zero Hunger') aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition in every country by 2030. They have realized that present efforts and progress are insufficient to fulfill all the requirements of SDG no. 2. Some countries of Africa are in very slow progress or even worsening in a few countries in the implementation of SDG 2. The situation of undernourishment in the general population was 19.1% in 2019 and it is expected to increase to 25.7% by 2030. The majority of undernourished people in Africa are found in the SSA. Improvements in child stunting in the SSA are very slow and in 2019 it was about 31%. They stress that all the countries of Africa should unify and act effectively to reach the goal [Atukunda et al., 2021]. Analee Pepper investigates the extent to which food and nutrition security early warning systems in the Sahel and West Africa are gender-responsive and highlight existing gaps at national and regional levels [Pepper, 2019].

The African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government observe that food security and nutrition and increase incomes in agriculture-based economies of Africa for sustainable development. African Union Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has increased annual national budgetary allocations for agriculture to at least 10% to ensure growth of the agricultural output of at least 6% annually [Sakho-Jimbira & Hathie, 2020]. Lindiwe M. Sibanda and Sithembile N. Mwamakamba have realized that to eliminate hunger; Africa needs to transition to new sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems that deliver nutritious food and a healthy environment for all people. The key considerations of them are: (i) the realization that nutrition insecurity is not food insecurity, (ii) the need for Africa to actualize its potential, (iii) the need to demystify policy development processes,



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(iv) the need to invest in better measurements and indicators, and (v) the need to create nature-based climate-smart solutions [Sibanda & Mwamakamba, 2021].

Victor Nechifor and his coauthors have studied effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in SSA. They have examined the medium-term macroeconomic outcomes of the pandemic on the Kenyan economy and have linked the results with a detailed food security and nutrition micro-simulation module. They have shown that the state of food security in Kenya remains vulnerable to the evolution of the pandemic abroad [Nechifor et al., 2021]. Narayan Chandra Nath has analyzed the status of food availability, access to food, food utilization, and food stability with an emphasis on balanced nutrition and food safety to address the problems of nutritional food security in Bangladesh. He has stressed food production, international trade, food stocks, price stability, safety nets, and public food distribution system to address food availability. He has emphasized strengthening the ability to afford food and intake of food of balanced nutrition [Nath, 2015].

3. Methodology of the Study

This study has been arranged based on secondary data from different sources. We have discussed aspects of food and nutrition of Africa. We have highlighted the staple foods and other most common foods of African countries. In the study, we have included statistical data from various research reports of FAO and other international organizations. We have stressed the food security of Africa and also have highlighted on challenges to food insecurity in Africa. Africa has the highest rate of under-5 stunting and wasting. Iron deficiency anemia is one of the most common health problems in Africa. Vitamin B12 and vitamin A deficiency is a common matters in Africa. Food security and nutrition are positively correlated with economic development. We have stressed the economic development for the food security of Africa. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a serious problem in African food security and nutrition. In the study, we attempt to eradicate poverty from Africa.

4. Objective of the Study

The principal aim of this study is to discuss food and nutrition insecurity in Africa. Some other specific objectives are to,

- a) investigate the paths for the implementation of food security successfully in Africa,
- b) focus on the major challenges in the implementation of food security,
- c) discuss the ways of ensuring nutrition security in the African society, and
- d) analyze the situation of poverty during COVID-19.

5. Food and Nutrition

Food and nutrition security requires well-managed inter-sectorial coordination, and the genuine integration of existing policies and programs in health, education, and environmental protection, as well as in agrarian reform and agricultural development [Government Gazette, 2014]. Food and nutrition insecurity is a common situation in all countries of Africa. Usually, Africans eat more grain foods. Staple foods of African countries are maize, sorghum, millet, wheat, and rice. Other most common foods are teff, cassava, yam, sweet potato, plantain, and enset. Plant-based foods are dark green leafy vegetables, tropical fruits, legumes, starchy stems, and root tubers. Animal products are fish, fermented milk, poultry, beef, and mutton [UNDP, 2012].

Inadequate food and poor health are two major factors of malnutrition in Africa. If an individual finds sufficient energy he/she is not ensured good nutrition; micronutrients, such as iron, vitamin A and D, iodine, etc. are essential for good health. At present, about 2 billion people are suffering from hidden hunger and the corresponding figure for visible hunger people is 805 million in the world [Nath, 2015].

5.1 Food



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Food is an essential item for the survival of every animal. It averts hunger, maintains health, satisfies our palate, and makes us happy, and is emotionally and socially content. Hence, the food we take should be clean, palatable, affordable, and of the quality that can maintain mental, emotional, physiologic, and physical health [Oniang'o et al., 2003]. If an individual lacks the basic food intake necessary to provide the energy and nutrients for a fully productive and active life then he/she experiences the sensation of hunger [Benson, 2020].

Household food security indicates that all the members of the family have sufficient quantity and quality of food to enjoy a healthy and active life [Gillespie & Haddad, 2001]. In 2019, more than 266 million people in Eastern Africa and 208 million people in Western Africa experienced food insecurity [Baumüller et al., 2020]. From 2016 to 2018 about 73 million people suffer from acute food insecurity in Africa and importing about 85% of its food from outside the continent cost \$35 billion annually [Dado, 2020]. About 2.37 billion people in the world did not have access to adequate food with 928 million facing food insecurity at severe levels in 2020 [FAO et al., 2021].

Hungry children compel to drop out of the educational system. Hungry and malnourished adult workers are quite unable to like healthy workers. Undernourished mothers give birth to low birth weight babies and create a weak future generation. A sick nation cannot provide a sustainable economy and welfare to society [Benson, 2020].

5.1.1 Food Security

If any person has adequately safe and nutritious food in both quality and quantity for a healthy and active life that provides proper energy, macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein, fats) and micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, electrolytes) at all times and prices he/she can afford; he/she is in food security [Benson, 2020]. According to Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 'Food Security' is achieved when it is ensured that *"All people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"* [FAO, 2000]. Food security is an important part of poverty alleviation. Every citizen and even refugees has the right of gaining sufficient food, water, and social security, and the government of the country is responsible to provide adequate food to mitigate hunger within its available resources [Benson, 2020]. Food security is not only an economic problem but also a social and political issue. It is a basic factor for the development of human capital and a starter for the overall development of society. It is covered if four dimensions, such as food availability, food accessibility, food utilization, and food stability are fulfilled successfully [FAO, 2009].

Food availability indicates the physical existence of food at national and household levels, which is related to food production, supply, population growth, and distribution. Food availability at the household level depends on the household's capacity to produce or acquire food, household food stockholding, and availability of food at local markets. Ensure of availability of food at the national level is domestic food production, public and private food stockholding, food imports and food aid, food exports and wastage in the way of distribution, storage and consumption. Wheat and maize are the largest cultivated and traded cereals in the world [Gregory, et al., 2005].

Food access indicates the affordability and allocation of food, as well as the preferences of individuals and households. It depends on household income, assets, remittances, gifts, borrowing, income transfers and food aid. It is largely influenced by economic factors, such as individuals having sufficient resources to obtain food. It confirms that all households have enough resources to obtain food in sufficient quantities, good quality and diversity for a nutritious diet. Access to food depends on whether the household has enough income to purchase food at prevailing prices or has sufficient land and other resources to grow its own food [UN, 1999, von Braun, 2008]. It is expected that maize prices will rise by 34% up to 100% between 2010 and 2050. As a result, it will be less affordable for poor consumers. Ultimately, consumers will shift from maize to rice, wheat, and other crops consumption [Nelson et al., 2009].

Food utilization indicates the digestion of the food consumed by individuals, which in turn is influenced by health status, water and sanitation conditions, and the microbiological and chemical safety of the food. Education about nutrition and food preparation can influence food utilization [FAO, 1997]. In some countries of Africa, such as Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, or Zimbabwe, people take only maize for total calories. Consequently, micronutrient deficiency persists among them [Pingali, 2015].



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Food stability refers to the supply of food at national and household levels that remain constant during the year and in the long term. It can be transitory, seasonal, or chronic. When natural disasters, such as drought, flood, cyclones, manmade disasters, such as civil conflicts, political unrest, etc. happen decreased food availability creates temporary food instability [Ecker & Breisinger, 2012]. Food production instability, price instability, import flow instability loss of employment or productivity also may cause temporary food instability [Stats SA, 2019]. It is very much driven by economic, environmental and political factors. The food price hike in 2011 pushed 68 million people into poverty [Ivanic et al., 2011].

The main cause of food insecurity in Africa is the inability of people to gain access to food due to poverty. Other causes of food insecurity are the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, civil war, strife, poor governance, drought, famine, agricultural dependency, etc. [Crush & Frayne, 2010]. Food insecurity and malnutrition have risen from 18.2% in 2014 to 20% in 2018 in Africa. Robust food systems and agriculture are crucial for food security. The economic and education development among fisher folks, forest people, and nomadic groups also must be created to achieve full food and nutrition security in Africa [FAO, 2020]. Many countries in the world, such as Singapore, England, Japan, etc. are not self-sufficient in food but are food secure, as they can import necessary foods but African countries have no such scope [Nath, 2015].

5.1.2. Challenges to Food Security

There are various challenges to food insecurity in Africa, such as underdeveloped agricultural practice, low fertility soils, storage of food preservation, environmental degradation, loss of crops during harvest, etc. About 95% of agricultural land in Africa is cultivated under rainfed and food production completely depends on favorable weather [Kherallah et al., 2002]. Various infectious diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, etc. reduce the man-hours available in agriculture and household food production. As a result, increased food production for the increased population is not always possible [FAO et al., 2021].

5.2 Nutrition

Good nutrition is crucial to health status throughout the lifecycle and also important to both individual and national development. Household food security, adequate primary health services, and optimal care and support to society are considered good nutrition [African Union, 2015]. About 239 million people in the SSA were undernourished in 2018. About 160 million people in Africa are found undernourished in 2021. At present Africa is at the highest levels of malnutrition in the world. Most of the undernourished people in Africa are in the SSA and about 32 million people increase since 2015 [Atukunda et al., 2021]. The population of Africa is increasing and most of them are children. Additional nutrition is necessary for the growing population. African children are the ones at the highest risk of hunger and malnutrition [African Union, 2015].

More than one-third world's undernourished people (about 282 million) are found in Africa. About 149.2 million (22%) global children under-5 suffered from stunting, about 45.4 million children under-5 were wasted, and about 38.9 million (5.7%) of children under-5 were affected by overweight in 2020 [FAO et al., 2021]. Nearly all countries in SSA experience multiple burdens of malnutrition that occurs as a result of inadequate, unbalanced, or excessive consumption of the macronutrients that provide dietary energy (carbohydrates, protein and fats) and the micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) that are essential for physical and cognitive growth and development [FAO, 2011].

Nutrition is considered a key factor in the health and well-being of society. It makes human capital development stronger. It is obvious that different forms of malnutrition have very significant effects on physical, mental, cognitive and physiological development. Malnutrition in adults in Africa is 8.6% in women and 8.3% in men. Maternal and child malnutrition indicates stunting, wasting, and deficiencies of essential vitamins and minerals [WHO, 2017]. Africa has the highest rate of under-5 stunting in the world; 33%, compared with a global average of 24%. In SSA the stunting rate is very high, for example, 53% in Burundi. As of 2013, an estimated 56 million stunted children lived in Africa. Global wasting (weight-for-height z-score < -2 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median) are expected 5% in



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2025 and 3% by 2030. Present wasting rate in Africa is 6.4%, which is lower than the global average of 6.9% [Global Nutrition Report, 2020].

5.2.1 Nutrition Security

Nutrition security indicates that a household has secure access to food coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health services, and knowledgeable care to ensure a healthy life for all household members [Benson, 2020]. Malnutrition arises mainly from an inadequate balanced diet. It is both a cause and consequence of poverty. Due to malnutrition maternal and child mortality increases, and also decreases resistance to infectious diseases. It negatively affects all aspects of an individual's health and development and limits societies' economic and social development [USAID, 2014]. Undernutrition and overnutrition are two forms of malnutrition. Overnutrition happens due to excess saturated fats and sugars and a lower level of physical exercise that results in obesity, heart disease, and other circulatory disorders, diabetes, and similar diseases. Maternal overweight and obesity increase maternal morbidity and infant mortality [Black et al., 2008]. On the other hand, undernutrition happens to the insufficient intake of energy and nutrients to meet an individual's needs to maintain good health. There are four broad sub-forms of undernutrition are wasting, stunting, underweight, and deficiencies in vitamins and minerals. Severe micronutrient deficiency creates cognitive development, anemia, and blindness; poor infant growth is visible; excess morbidity and mortality occur both in adults and children [Benson, 2020]. The number of undernourished people in SSA is about 222 million in 2016 and overweight people are about 9.7 million in 2017 [Adom et al., 2019].

Only breastfeeding must be ensured for infants during the first six months of life. After six months, they need additional foods that are enriched with vitamins and minerals to meet their needs for proper growth and development. More than 95% of infants are breastfed in Africa. The rate of bottle-feeding is high in some African countries, such as Tunisia, Nigeria, Namibia and Sudan. In SSA, the prevalence of *Exclusive breastfeeding* (EBF) is 36%, which is very low compared with the global EBF target rate set at 50% by 2025 [Bhattacharjee et al., 2019].

Iron deficiency anemia is one of the most common health problems in Africa that particularly affects young children and pregnant women. Deficiency is that folic acid is essential during the antenatal period. The prevalence of anemia exceeds 60% in the infant in some countries of Africa and iron supplementation could prevent around one-third of them. In addition, anemia affects 68% of preschool children, 57% of pregnant women and 48% of non-pregnant women in Africa. Iron deficiency is created by inadequate diet, pica, and geophagia, as well as chronic inflammation (malaria, digestive and urinary parasites, etc.). Deficiencies of vitamin B12 and vitamin A, hookworm infections, etc. are also common in severe anemia [van Hensbroek et al., 2011; Lemoine & Tounian, 2020]. The prevalence of vitamin A deficiency in young children and iron deficiency of women in SSA are the highest [Stevens et al., 2015]. Maternal anemia is caused for poor nutrition, lack of access to health care facilities, chronic infections, poor micronutrient supplementation, etc. [Dorsamy et al., 2020]. In Africa, 57% (17.2 million) of pregnant women and 48% (70 million) of non-pregnant women are anemic [Ayoya et al., 2012].

About 11% of the present world population (820 million) is undernourished in terms of energy intake, and about 17% of people (1.3 billion) suffer from micronutrient deficiencies and most of them live in Asia and SSA [FAO et al., 2019]. Food security and nutrition are positively correlated with economic development. Therefore, economic development should be increased in every African country in parallel to the improvement of food security and nutrition [Ecker & Nene, 2012].

5.2.2 Food and Nutrition Security during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a devastating influence on the world economy. It has weakened global food security and nutrition systems that threaten the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable people. About 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic which is 161 million more than in 2019. The hungry people are increasing very rapidly in multiple forms of malnutrition in 2021 [FAO et al., 2021].

Africa faced various natural disasters, such as the Ebola outbreak in 2014-2015, the food crisis in 2008-2009, and COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Before the COVID-19 pandemic African countries were suffering from poverty and food



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insecurity. The COVID-19 has thrown the continent in serious uncertainty to the implementation of the SDG 2. The pandemic has health, social, economic, and environmental implications for humanity [Drafor-Amenyah, 2021].

COVID-19 has increased the food and nutrition insecurity in Africa, as well as in the world than the usual normal situation. It creates slow progress to 'Zero Hunger' and has fallen negative effect on the economic development in Africa. It is expected that COVID-19 could create an additional 2.6 million stunted and 9.3 million wasted people that resulting 168,000 additional child deaths and 2.1 million maternal anemia cases by 2022 [WFP, 2020; UN, 2021].

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

Food and nutrition insecurity is a common situation in all African countries. Africa faces the largest food insecurity problems in the world. Most of the poorest countries of the world are in SSA. Food security in SSA is a key issue for poverty alleviation. At present, the highest population growth is visible in Africa. It is estimated that about 200 million people in Africa are undernourished. The main cause of food insecurity in Africa is the inability of people to gain access to food due to poverty. The COVID-19 pandemic has threatened both the public health and food security of Africans. The application of new agricultural technologies, specialization, and commercialization can increase the productivity of the farms and household welfare in African countries. Taking various constructive steps Africa must reduce hunger and malnutrition very quickly for the welfare of African humanity. Special attention must be taken to women in their childbearing years by ensuring their proper food and nutrition. The African Union and the international community must take necessary actions to reduce poverty in Africa. Elimination of stunting and wasting is not impossible if all the nations of Africa try unifying with global humanity.

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