

# Worsening Living Conditions; Poverty and Food Insecurity in Zambian Communities & and Strategic Solutions to Mitigate Them.

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**ABSTRACT**—this is an investigation into the living conditions of majority of Zambian communities, in the wake of economic uncertainties. This study is aimed at looking for alternative solutions that could mitigate the worsening living conditions. One critical component to worsening conditions is the lack of food security in households. The study further discusses causes leading to shortage of food. A happy and healthy family needs to have enough to eat, and one that can afford three nutritionally balanced meals per day. With the ever increasing energy prices, it all translates to increase in the food basket per family per day. Energy such as electricity and fuels has been determinant in the cost of a food basket. Recently ZESCO increased the electricity tariffs which has unsettled many and brought country-wide complaints as this worsens the cost of day-to-day utilities. Just how deep has this gone to affect the ordinary households? Answers are important in order to determine the level of possible interventions necessary.

*Keywords: food security; unemployment; MDGs; poverty; Hunger and malnutrition.*

## 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE LIVING CONDITIONS IN ZAMBIA.

The majority of Zambians live below the poverty datum line. It has been said that many families live below a \$1 per day. There is need to understand how deep rooted this problem is in society. Before going any further, a look at the meaning of the word poverty is necessary, so that we know exactly what we are dealing with. So what is poverty?

In simplicity, Poverty is the failure of people to meet their basic needs, such as shelter, food, clean water, good health and clothing. These basic needs should be met at all costs for life to be normal. When people fail to have access to these basic necessities, it means that community is living in abject poverty. This is a challenge in the world today as the wealth is concentrated in 1% of the population while 99% of the population is living in poverty.

According to the Poverty Strategic Paper (PSRP, 2011)<sup>1</sup> the main barriers to moving out of poverty are:

## 1.1 Lack of Significant Economic Growth

The foremost barrier to moving out of poverty in Zambia is the lack of sustained levels of positive growth. This has been exacerbated by increased income inequality, the persistence of discrimination against women and the girl child, insufficient investment in economic and social infrastructure to keep pace with requirements for rapid growth, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Significant poverty reduction requires a substantial injection of resources into poverty reduction activities and that is not possible without growth. In its absence, there can be little increase in domestic resources either through savings or tax revenues. Despite the comprehensive macroeconomic reforms that have been implemented in Zambia in the past ten years, there has not been any significant growth in the economy. This issue is developed further, where the overall objectives and strategies are discussed.

Currently the country is merely trading, with a lot of imports both in government and private sector. This is creating and widening the deficit as more money is externalized and little exports leaving the country. Growth comes when the country has developed their manufacturing sectors, which also include agriculture. This situation of trading is difficult to record any meaningful growth in the economy, and if there is no growth, the poverty among the populace continues to grow.

## 1.2 High Inequality

The prospects for growth as well as the subsequent impact of any growth on poverty reduction are stymied by a high level of inequality. There is ample research that shows that where initial inequality in respect of income, education, and assets is high, growth does not easily occur.

Rural-urban, inter-provincial, and inter-social strata disparities are already evident from the tables presented so far. Another crucial conclusion of empirical research is that a historically unequal situation might perpetuate itself unless changed by government policy, such as asset redistribution.

A main reason why inequality tends to beget more inequality is the unequal access to credit. The poor cannot easily access credit, owing to little or no wealth to provide as collateral and hence continue to languish in near- or below-subsistence state.

The rich, on the other hand, have easy access to credit and hence are able to build up further on their already substantial wealth.

This is one of the reasons why small-scale farmers constitute the poorest social stratum in Zambia, and why perhaps poverty has substantially come down among large-scale farming households. Another group that is also poor for a similar reason is that of female headed households.

## 1.3 Debt Burden

Another major factor that has reduced resources for poverty reduction is the heavy debt burden, which has exerted a significant crowding out effect on social expenditures. Over the years, debt service has on average accounted for 10 percent of the GDP, while all the social sectors together have accounted for only 5 percent. The inadequate expenditures on economic and social services have contributed to the debilitation of the country's stock of human and economic

<sup>1</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PSRP,2011), pages 24 -28. Accessed on 21 Jan 2017.

capital and this in turn has constrained growth. Zambia needs debt relief again. Under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) programme, Zambia had her debts written off by the majority of donors. This was achieved during the late Levi Mwanawasa administration, but to date, the country has further contracted huge debts, bringing the country back to indebtedness amounting to approximately \$7billion. The country under the Patriotic Front (PF) administration had increased the debt burden through the issue of the Eurobond<sup>2</sup>. Despite the deficit, the Eurobond was oversubscribed and the country sold more than €750million notes. There is need to manage this excess borrowing and redirect the funds to investments of foreseeable returns. We need to prioritize on our planning and resource utilisation.

#### 1.4 Excessive External Dependence

The absence of significant growth and the huge debt burden have made external funding a necessity. External funding constituted, for instance, 89 percent and 84 percent respectively of the total spending in the water and sanitation sector in 1995 and 1996, compared to 31 percent in 1990. In 2001, 53 percent of the national budget was expected to be funded from outside. Some macro measures of the extent to which Zambia is dependent on aid, reaching a peak in 1995 but falling thereafter as donors reduced support. This dependence is a bad precedence, which every successive leader follows.

Zambia needs to strengthen and develop its internal capacity. Such capacities will make the country stand without donors. Developing

internally and reducing reliance on debt and external help.

Zambia like Botswana has capacity to utilize its natural resources such as Agriculture, tourism and mining. Zambian natural resources have the potential to increase on the exports, thereby reducing the national deficit and improving the balance of payment. Managing the mining industry well can help this country move from these economic doldrums. But not overly depending on mining, but also developing the agricultural sector and encouraging people to concentrate on growing cash crops such as Soy Beans, Flowers, Apples, Cotton etc. To some extent, Zambia is dependent also on South Africa on certain agricultural products such as Apples and Oranges. We need to have greater improvements in this sector.

#### 1.5 Unsatisfactory Prioritization and Corruption

Even within the limited resources, poverty reduction may not get its due share with wrong prioritisation, misdirection of resources, and lack of transparency in their utilisation. For instance, to date Zambia has severely fallen short of fulfilling the benchmarks for allocation to areas of priority human concerns prescribed by the Human Development Ratio and the 20:20 Initiative. On top of this, there is a lot of corruption; many public service workers tend to take advantage of their positions in governments to abuse their authority and siphon funds and misdirect them to personal endeavors.

There is need to have a strong control measures in terms of ending the scourge of corruption. The government should end corruption by coming up with strategies that would monitor utilisation and disbursement of funds.

The Auditor General's report is always filled with question marks begging for answers. There are always huge funds running to millions which

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-04-08/zambia-says-1-billion-eurobond-was-oversubscribed-correct-> Accessed on 20.04.2017

not accounted for. So there should be efforts to identify the people responsible for the mismanagement.

The prudent utilisation of such funds will lead to the development of infrastructure and as much of government funding is directed towards poverty alleviation, there would be improved living conditions for many Zambians.

## 1.6 Inadequate Social Safety Nets

The pervasive poverty situation, the provision of social safety nets has been relatively limited. Social safety net expenditures over the years have been declining in real terms. Between 1998 and 1999 for instance, the community, social and personal services sector that includes activities in the area of community development and social services registered a decline in real value added from K178.8 billion to K 175.8 billion.

Social safety nets include the efforts to create community involvements in the eradication of poverty, by creating groupings such as cooperatives.

These cooperatives have currently been dwindling in communities, which means not enough efforts are being made to spread development agenda to grassroots. It would help reduce poverty if poor communities are taught skills of self-sustainability such as fish farming, and other areas.

## 1.7 Unemployment In Zambia

Unemployment is a growing concern in Zambia, many youths have nothing to do and there are many who have left universities with no prospect of finding a job. There is a negative effect that unemployment has on the society, which is;

- Increase in crime rate, as many youths turn to stealing and burglary to meet their daily needs.

- Drunkenness is another increasing problem among the youths as they tend to have easy access to alcohol. The unemployment has made many youths start drinking from the early hours of the day.
- Escalation of diseases due to the effects of alcohol and this is a challenge that causes the spread of HIV/AIDS among the youth.
- General decay in morality in both sexes among the youth, many have no respect for elders and tend to have a rebellious attitude to their parents.

These have further deepened poverty in communities as many would-be bread winners are rendered baggers. It is therefore necessary to have programs to reduce the level of unemployment in Zambia. It is important to have many interventions to counter this growing problem. There is a greater need to have a change in the school curriculum, to include the skills of entrepreneurship and business development among the youth. This will provide empowerment and ensure majority of youths have a contribution to economic growth.

There is a sharp increase in underage drinking and abuse of drugs. Intervention programs such as a taskforce to police and the beer parlors and retrieve underage patronizing such places. There should be tighter regulations and enforcement of laws that restrict drinking alcohol during productive hours of the day.

## 1.8 Lack of Food Security

There was adequate evidence to show that lack of food security in many households is prevalent. Many households barely have sufficient food to last a month. There were limited sources of adequate food as evidenced by poorly nourished children and elderly. The indication showed that less than 40% of the population managed three meals a day. If people ate anything as a normal meal, chances were that it was imbalanced in nutritional value. This was a huge challenge to families with dependents under the age of 6 years.

If a family could barely manage to have a meal, it was also evident most had no capacity to send their children to school. Due to this assertion Zambia risks losing the 100% millennium development goal achievement in education for the girl child. Lack of Food security in household has potential to derail many would be achievements and add such challenges as

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted based on the following parameters:

### 2.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand the level poverty among Zambians and what should be done to reduce this. The last quarter of 2016, saw a sharp increase in household commodities and fuels, following the removal of fuel subsidies. This had a drastic impact on the living conditions among communities. To understand how deep the impact of the change has been, this paper aims at providing evidence-based research in the situation. Further, we review the food security situation in households.

There also was need to bring down the ever-widening gap between poor and rich, and this report will come up with strategies to manage this.

As Zambia looks back at the achievements made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs 2015), it is noticeable that more needs to be done in most areas.

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, accessed on 25.01.17)<sup>3</sup>, During the period 2006- 2010, Zambia made significant progress towards meeting the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) particularly in primary school enrollment, child malnutrition and the fight against malaria.

However the country will have to make further effort to reduce poverty and maternal mortality, prevent new HIV infections, ensure that children complete secondary school, increase access to clean water and sanitation, and safeguard sustainable environmental development. Overall positive economic growth rates are not reflected in the efforts to reduce poverty or in addressing inequalities, which remain especially high in rural areas.

### 2.2 Specific Research Objective

Worsening Living Conditions; Poverty and Food Insecurity in Zambia & and Strategic Solutions to mitigate this.

### 2.3 General Objectives

The general objectives of this study were to:

- Understand the impact of the efforts made by government in eradication of poverty and unemployment among its citizens.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Programmes, Millennium Development Goals, Accessed on 25.01.17.

- To come up with workable alternatives that could be used in making an impact on reduction of poverty in society.
- To state and measure the impact of government efforts on the implementation of food security interventions.

The Millennium Development Goals MDGs aimed at improving the livelihood of people at the grass root by promising to:

## 2.4 Research Questions

The following questions were asked with regard to the poverty situation in Zambia:

- What effects has poverty brought on the Societies of Zambia?
- How can we quantify the level of Poverty?
- How can the growing gap between rich and poor be narrowed?
- Are the MDGs being achieved in relation to poverty?
- Is there sufficient political will to counter growing poverty levels?
- When is this poverty and unemployment going to end?

## 2.5 The Research Hypothesis

The fitting hypothesis for this study was as follows:

*Not enough is being done in reducing poverty levels, Improve food security and reduce unemployment; and this will continue to grow in Zambia, despite efforts by Government and other cooperating partners.*

## 3.0 Conceptual Framework / Model

The normal situation for Zambian families is to have sufficient to eat on everyday of the year. There must be a balance in the diet for a single

family. Lack of Food security is a powerful indicator for the level of poverty in communities.

When a family can afford to have enough food to feed on, the rest of the problems are made secondary. The family with sufficient to eat, is one that can manage other aspects of poverty somehow. As the economy indicates food is pricey than clothing, because for clothing, there are options manageable to poor communities such as second hand clothing, which are really affordable. The major indicator for poverty is lack of food security, malnutrition and stunted growth for children under the age of 5 year.

## 4.0 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### 4.1 Materials and Design

The materials, tools used in collection and manipulation of data are:

- House Hold Questionnaires
- Stata for data analysis
- Excel for data input and entry.
- Car for transportation

The data collection was conducted over the period of two months. This involved door to door convenience sampling method, as households were closely located. Data collection was done by way of personal interviews using a structured questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed to collect information on the various aspects of the living conditions of the households.

### 4.2 Definitions and General Concepts

**4.2.1 Head of Household** - This is the person all members of the household regard as the head and who normally makes day-to-day decisions concerning the running of the household. The head of the household could be male or female.

**4.2.2 Household** -A household was defined as a group of persons who normally eat and live together. These people may or may not be related by blood, but make common provision for food and other essentials for living. A household may comprise several members and in some cases may have only one member.

**4.2.3 Poverty Status** - All households and household members were assigned a poverty status based on the household expenditure and/or consumption. Each member of a household had the same poverty status as assigned to the household poverty status.

**4.2.4 Employee:** A person who worked for a public or private employer and received remuneration in wages, salaries either in cash or in-kind.

**4.2.5 Self-employed:** Refers to a person who operated his or her own economic enterprise(s) and hired no employees.

**4.2.6 Household monthly income:** This is the monthly earnings of a household from engaging in economic activities such as the production of goods and services, and the ownership of assets. Household monthly income is the sum of all incomes of household members.

**4.2.7 Poverty Level Determination** – this was determined according to the Central Statistical Office (CSO) use of the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) approach when measuring welfare outcomes of various households (Ravallion,1994; CSO, 2004)<sup>4</sup>.

This method essentially starts by determining the cost of a simple food basket that meets minimal nutritional requirements for a family of six.

<sup>4</sup> Ravallion,1994; CSO, 2004, p179. Living Conditions Monitoring Survey.

## 4.3 Systematic Review and Material Analysis

Research was conducted to study on the living conditions, poverty, and hunger and food insecurity issues of majority of Zambian communities. This study was conducted in Ndola, in a community of Kawama Ward, 8 kilometres from Ndola City Centre. This community is typical of many communities in Zambia and these will give a glimpse into the conditions obtaining in the general populace.

**4.1 Observations:** The general outlook of the community under review showed despondence toward the worsening living condition. This was evident as answers came forth on basic things they could not afford. This reflected heavily in the data and information, showing a sense of hopelessness in the way the economy is turning out to be. Fig 1.0 shows the response to the future economic expectation.

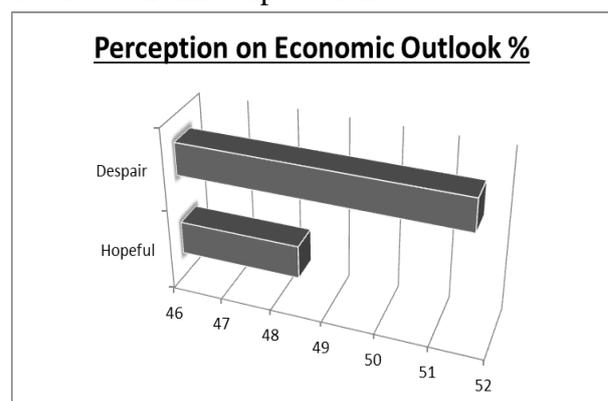


Fig 1.0 perception on future economic outlook.

Zambian citizens traditionally values the extended family set up. The average household consists of at least five people, in which only one has the potential to earn an income. The rest of the family members are recipients. So with low level of income, there is always enormous pressure from the head of household to provide. This pressure coupled with the increasing cost of basic needs, creates a state of despair.

It was also discovered that 29% of households where headed by women either widowed, unmarried or divorced, compared to 71% of male headed households. This is the group found most vulnerable to abuse and neglect. This is an alarming and this is where a lot of children also suffer hunger and lack of nutritionally balanced food. Figure 2.0 shows the trend in female headed households:

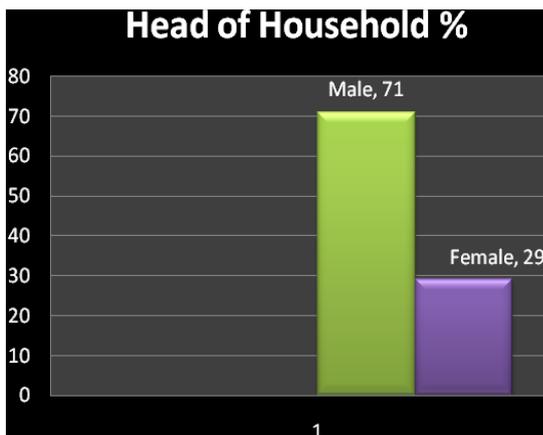


Figure 2.0 Female Headed Household

This group offered a more dismal condition as they contended with limited income and pressure to provide for their families. Women headed households also showed that they were not able to meet the daily food requirements, which three meals per day. This was identifiable through the dependent variable ‘meals per day’, which gave evidence of food insecurity. Most of these female led households resorted to selling vegetables, beans, potatoes as a means of providing source of food to family. Figure 2.1 below shows the percentage of 29% population having less than three meals per day, compared to 71% who did. Most indicated that they had little food to manager three meals per day. However, even some of the male headed households showed critical imbalance in terms of food security. Some indicated they could

manage three meals per day, but the condition of Children showed nutritional deficiency.

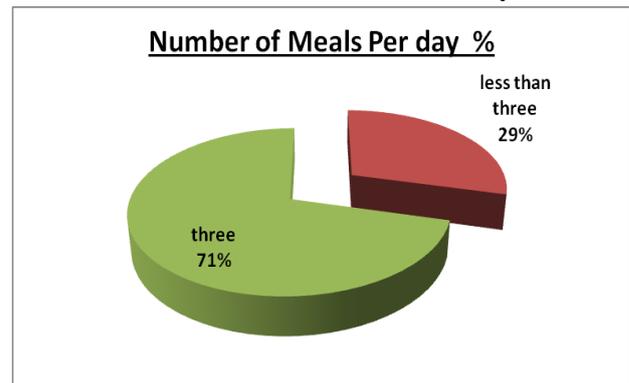


Figure 2.1 Percentage of Meals per Day per Household.

The 71% is in the bracket of those household who had some form of stable income through salary, trade and farming activity. However, majority of these people are on the low income side to guarantee sustainable food security, and affordability of basic human needs. This way, it is difficult to have a variety foodstuff to provide a balanced diet. These low income households have their income distributed among the many basic needs such as energy, water, rent/shelter, food and other needs.

It was also empirically visible that majority also lack capacity to provide a decent education to their siblings. This is a great concern, especially in households with girl children being vulnerable to early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Family with the weak income brackets as shown below in Figure 2.3; cannot stretch their income beyond feeding:

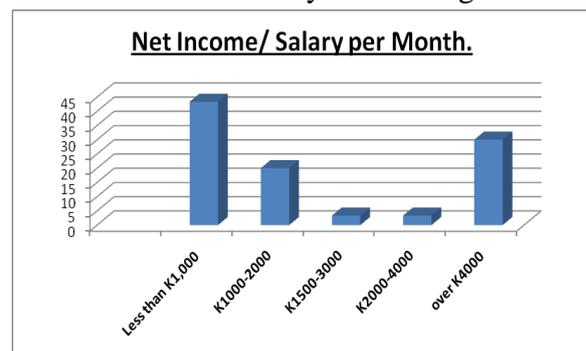


Figure 2.3 Net Income / Salary per Month

Majority of these households fall below the sustainable income level as can be seen in figure 2.3. Comparing these results with the current cost of basic needs for Ndola Town, there is a dreadful realization that non in the income groups is able to sustain their household needs with the prevailing income. According to the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)<sup>5</sup>, the Basic Needs Basket for Ndola Town as at April 2017, the following is the obtaining reality:

**JCTR BASIC NEEDS BASKET FOR NDOLA AS AT APRIL 2017**

|  |              |                 |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| Basic Food Items for a family of Five  | ZMK          | 1,815.98        |
| Essential Non-Food Items   | ZMK          | 2,796.37        |
| <b>Total for both but less additional costs such as medical, school and transport costs.</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>4,612.35</b> |

Table 01: Source: JCTR April 2017 BNB for Ndola Town

The information above does suggest that the Cost of Basic needs per household of five people in the community under review is above the income levels of more than 80% of the population.

#### 4.4 The Scientific Relationship (regression)

The study was also conducted to determine whether income (independent variable) does affect the number of meals (dependent) a household have. The result showed that there was a strong relationship between the two variables and there was 95% confidence interval, with the chi square value of 0.022 =2.2% and regression of 0.1733, as shown in the table 2.0.

| . regress mealsday incomesalary |            |           |            |                    |                      |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Source                          | SS         | df        | MS         | Number of obs = 30 |                      |
| Model                           | 1.01698371 | 1         | 1.01698371 | F( 1, 28) =        | 5.87                 |
| Residual                        | 4.84968295 | 28        | .173202963 | Prob > F =         | 0.0221               |
| Total                           | 5.86666667 | 29        | .202298851 | R-squared =        | 0.1733               |
|                                 |            |           |            | Adj R-squared =    | 0.1438               |
|                                 |            |           |            | Root MSE =         | .41618               |
| mealsday                        | Coef.      | Std. Err. | t          | P> t               | [95% Conf. Interval] |
| incomesalary                    | .1066766   | .044024   | 2.42       | 0.022              | .0164975 .1968558    |
| _cons                           | 2.45953    | .1361665  | 18.06      | 0.000              | 2.180606 2.738454    |

Table2.0: Regression model. Meals against Income

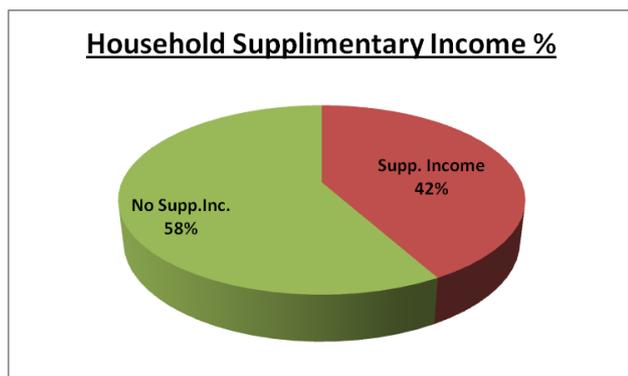
The study showed that the most stable households are those involved in trading and agricultural activities. This group demonstrated capacity to have sufficient food for their families. Again another two variables were tested to see how they affect households on food security. The variable of number of meals per day against the members per household (independent). This too showed a stronger relationship that there was a stronger link to the lack of food security in households as Table 3.0:

| . regress mealsday familymembers |            |           |            |                    |                      |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Source                           | SS         | df        | MS         | Number of obs = 30 |                      |
| Model                            | .447370003 | 1         | .447370003 | F( 1, 28) =        | 2.31                 |
| Residual                         | 5.41929666 | 28        | .193546309 | Prob > F =         | 0.1396               |
| Total                            | 5.86666667 | 29        | .202298851 | R-squared =        | 0.0763               |
|                                  |            |           |            | Adj R-squared =    | 0.0433               |
|                                  |            |           |            | Root MSE =         | .43994               |
| mealsday                         | Coef.      | Std. Err. | t          | P> t               | [95% Conf. Interval] |
| familymemb-s                     | -.110009   | .0723581  | -1.52      | 0.140              | -.2582279 .0382099   |
| _cons                            | 3.213706   | .3260133  | 9.86       | 0.000              | 2.545898 3.881514    |

Table.3.0 regression model: Meals against Family Members.

These two models demonstrate that the families are not having enough to eat and therefore are living in abject poverty. Families that have shown resilience are those that combined some level of income with trading and agricultural activity. They provided hope that food security is possible. Figure 2.4 shows the group of 42% of this group who agreed that supplementary income to support their families:

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.jctr.org.zm/images/BNBs/Ndola\\_April\\_BNB.pdf](http://www.jctr.org.zm/images/BNBs/Ndola_April_BNB.pdf) Accessed on 07.06.2017



**Figure 2.4 Additional income support to families.**

Any increase in commodities such as electricity and fuel, means increasing the cost of food basket and widening the gap further to keep majority of families deep into poverty. Obviously now the major concern is on the children in these household. Majority was exposed to poor nutrition and at high risk of be stunted and likely to contract other hunger related diseases.

This study help measure the Absolute poverty<sup>6</sup> existent and common in majority household in Ndola- Kawama area, all things being equal, this is typical of most communities in townships in Zambia as they are exposed to similar variables.

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<sup>6</sup> **Absolute poverty:** uses a poverty line based on a fixed expenditure or consumption level. Absolute poverty lines typically specify the amount of money that is required to meet a minimum standard of living, such as basic nutritional requirements and essential non-food necessities (basic clothing, housing, etc). Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report, p176, CSO

## 5.0 Discussion.

A look at the hypothesis would and objectives with regard to the analysis; review the growing disparity between needs of the people and government policies. This clearly states that little effort is being done to improve the living conditions of majority of households in communities. This to many is a point of political argument, but according to this research, there is no strong political will to counter food insecurity and poverty.

As a country, Zambia risks sliding back on the benefits of achieved MDGs Goal 2, which is achieving universal primary education. This is because many households with not take their children to school due to impact of poverty.

The greater concern is how to keep the girl child in school where there is little or no financial capacity. Majority of the most productive age groups 25 – 45 years have no meaningful source of income. Most end up indulging in illicit activities such beer drinking and stealing. Year in year out, the country records a bumper harvest in maize production. But this does not fully impact on the grassroots. One may ask why there seems to be hunger in homes.

## 5.1 Recommendation and Conclusion

There are identifiable areas for community growth which have been noted to increase the potential to reduce poverty and hunger. The following have been identified to have the potential to reduce poverty and hunger:

### 5.1.1 Agricultural Activity

The government should focus on implementing agricultural intervention initiatives at household level. This should be done by making resources such as inputs affordable and available to all.

The government should also encourage diversification in households and among small scale farmers. Other potential crops other than maize are Soya beans, Sun flower, groundnuts millet, etc. these have not only the potential to end poor nutrition but also earn households income. There is also need to encourage the use of agricultural technologies aimed at improving yields for poor farming communities.

The World Bank Agricultural Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA)<sup>7</sup>, to which Zambia is a part, is a great initiative that can benefit many.

As stated, the program recognizes; *'Agriculture as the largest sector in the economies of the three countries and a major source of livelihoods for an estimated 277 million people living across Southern Africa'*. Raising agricultural productivity is critical for fighting poverty, achieving food security and protecting the environment. This one vehicle can be used in collaboration with the international community initiative that recognizes the importance of eliminating poverty through agriculture.

To this effect, the Government of Zambia received \$30million loan this year (2017) under the APPSA programme through the Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI)<sup>8</sup> to focus on technology generation and dissemination, infrastructure and human capital development, coordination and facilitation, as reported in print

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2013/03/14/world-bank-support-boosting-food-production-malawi-mozambique-zambia>

<sup>8</sup> The Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI) is the largest Agricultural research entity in the country. It has 10 research stations with Mt. Makulu Central Research Station Being the institutes Headquarters. The Institutes overall objectives is to develop and adapt crop, soil and plant protection technologies and to provide a high quality, appropriate and cost effective service to farmers.

media dated 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017.<sup>9</sup> It was further stated that this will benefit 2.3million farmers and other end-users.

It is the hope of the researcher that these initiatives are carried out with maximum efficiency so that benefits can trickle down to household levels. As much as implement efficient agricultural methods, we should also embark on value addition to our produce. This will ignite the entrepreneurial growth and increase agricultural exports and ultimately improve the balance of payments. This sector should not be handled casually, but with strong resolve to make Zambia a real food basket. The African Development Bank (ADB), through the FEED AFRICA: Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa,<sup>10</sup> states that; *increased food demand and changing consumption habits driven by demographic factors such as population growth and urbanization are leading to rapidly rising net food imports, which are expected to grow from US\$35bn in 2015 to over US\$110bn by 2025.*

This is calling for action to turn this trend and change begins with individual countries like Zambia to set the pace for the rest of Africa. Value addition and agricultural exports have the potential to create employment and reduce poverty further. This needs consented efforts, we have mismanaged this sector for long, and it's time to wake up. Only Zambia can achieve food security for Zambians.

## 5.1.2 Trade and Skills development

As mentioned earlier, majority of Zambian youths are lacking sustainable skills, there is need to develop life-sustaining skills across the

<sup>9</sup> The Zambia Daily Mail; date 30 May 2017, *Finance and Agri-business*.

<sup>10</sup>

Feed\_Africa\_Strategy\_for\_Agricultural\_Transformation\_in\_Africa\_2016-2025.pdf

country to help mitigate youth unemployment. Government should come up with Empowerment schemes for the youths to enable them contribute to the economic development.

Through the government ministries, youth skills training centers should be develop for various crafts. This would give more hope and direction to the youths, who seem marginalized economically. Government should roll out tangible development programs for youths, such as encouraging youths to take up agriculture training skills such as fish farming, at early age and provide resources.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The problem of poverty and food insecurity is not new but this research shows that conditions of these two ills could be escalated to unmanageable levels, if intervention is not forthcoming and efficient. Policy makers should aim at underpinning the importance of developing multiple agricultural programs to enhance food security in households at community levels. Promote farming activities by providing affordable inputs, training and infrastructure necessary. Building a healthy and wealthy Zambia begins with a nutritionally balanced meal. As Wealth begins with good health, poverty will end with good nutrition.

Time to change the youth is now, turning their energy into a synergy of productivity. Engaging the youth is critical to create a sense of direction and induce creativity. Great potential is being wasted through drunkenness and careless indulgences. Time to take stock of our capabilities as a nation and use them to fight hunger and poverty.

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