FAMINE AND HUNGER IN AFRICA

Hunger is situation where there is not enough food to eat resulting into illness or death while famine refers to a situation of extremes scarcity of food in a given period to feed the people. Both situations are characterized by suffering malnutrition and sometimes leads to severe loss of lives, for example, almost 36,000 Rwandese died of famine in 1943 -1944 due to poor performance of potatoes.

Famine and hunger has been one of the challenges of the post-independence states in Africa.

Estimates from UN agencies, African governments and relief organizations indicate that nearly 30 million Africans are at risk of facing famine.

About 15 million are in the Horn of Africa over 14 million in southern Africa and hundreds of thousands in the Sahel of West Africa.

Between 1993– 94 in Somalia alone, over 1000 persons died everyday with 2 people dying in one village in Sudan, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

The problem of famine and hunger has not only had social effects but has also fuelled civil conflict, insecurity and poverty.

Causes of famine and hunger in Africa

The causes of famine and hunger in Africa are both human and natural factors.

Human factors

Poverty; The increasing poverty amongst Africans has forced many into selling off their land to new land lords who establish plantations, others sell off their hard produced food to meet basic needs like health and education. In addition, due to poverty most Africans farmers cannot afford improved seeds for example; currently a kilogram of Hybrid maize is at 3000 shillings, this is expensive for a peasant. However even when they get the seeds they lack the money to construct good preservation stores for the foodstuffs. Thus, the foodstuffs are wasted due to poverty constraints. When short fall in production of food arises, people are unable to but food even what is in the national treasury is in adequate to meet sufficient food imports to supplement domestic food production.

Political instabilities and armed conflicts lead to famine. Most African countries have been affected by political instabilities. These instabilities interrupt food cultivation and other farm activities. They Make people not to settle in their homes to carry out agriculture instead they are always on the run for fear of being killed. This has led to low food production in countries like southern Sudan, Somalia, Chad, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia and Northern Uganda.

Poor storage facilities lead to famine. The methods of food storage and conservation are poor in Africa. Farmers lose some of their produce in the course of harvesting, they tend to abandon some of the corps in the gardens due to lack of storage facilities at home. Some produce is wasted at home in the course of drying or storage. In some communities, food stores are shared with animals and birds that encroach on what is stored.

Cultural practices also limit the range of foods produced. In Africa, different ethnic groups tend to emphasize long honored foods and consumption habits. Plantation farming societies like the Baganda in Uganda rarely grow cereals like millet and sorghum that could be stored for longer periods than the banana, the nomadic societies like the Turkana and Karamojong have negative attitude toward growing crops. This leads to food shortage especially in times of drought, bad rains, animal epidemics and political instabilities. Some societies in Africa tend to exemplify men from work leaving the responsibility to the women who are weak and therefore low production of food. Some societies like the Bagwere, Iteso and others in Uganda habitually use millet for local brew, leaving insufficient amount for food.

Poor farming method amongst Africans especially in the tropical countries leads to famine. Poor farming methods such as; over cropping/over cultivation that is the growing of many crops on one piece of land caused soil exhaustion.

Bush burning has destructive effect on the soil by killing of bacteria in the soil that is important to the soil.
Over stocking, this is the keeping of many animals (cattle) in small area.
Over grazing which is the keeping of too many herds of cattle where there is no enough pasture.
All the above methods of farming lead to soil infertility and therefore poor yields.

Lack of modern techniques of agricultural production lead to famine. Most farming communities in Africa lack modern implements such as tractors high yielding seeds, fertilizers and agricultural processing plants. As a result the quality and quantity of food produced is very low, which gives way for famine and hunger to persist.
Dependence on foreign Aid has enhanced famine in Africa. Most African countries heavily depend on foreign assistance in terms of food aid. This dependence syndrome has made them unable to become self-sustaining in food production since they expect assistance. Africa up to 1960 used to produce 95% of its food but recent idea of food imports and aid has changed the trend thus causing food scarcities.

Corruption and mismanagement of food supplies has led to outbreak of famine in Africa. Some notorious African governments have often diverted resources meant for food supplies to either their selfish ends or non-priorities. Consequently, local communities become vulnerable to famine and hunger.

Long term effects of HIV/AIDS in Africa have been responsible for declining labour productivity in agriculture. The disease drains the most productive in agriculture. The disease drains the most productive age group of 20-50 years, leaving behind orphans and the elderly who cannot produce much food.
External influence of the developed countries. Former colonial masters such as Britain, France and Portugal have continued to influence African countries to concentrate on growing crops at the expense of declining food production. This imbalance has created fertile ground for famine and hunger to persist.

High population is another cause for famine in some parts of Africa. Areas with high population densities have experienced land fragmentation resulting into declining crop yields. These areas have also been cultivated intensively leading to soil exhaustion and erosion. These practices have reduced the capacity of the land to produce adequate food thus giving way for persistence famine.

Poor mobilization and education of the rural population in modern farming practices and food management is partly responsible for the looming hunger and famine in African countries. In Uganda, NARO has tried but still it has not covered the entire rural peasantry communities. Demonstration farms are also few in Africa to enable farmers improve on food crop yields.

Lack of common agricultural policy has caused food shortage in Africa. This is worsened by inadequate regional co-operation and national interests. In Uganda, for example, maize is exported due to surplus while in neighboring southern Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia people are suffering from famine. Famine can also be seen within one country where one sub-region for example Kaaramoja is experiencing famine while large food granaries are surplus in another sub-region like Teso.

The land tenure system in Africa explains the occurrence of famine in Africa. in traditional Africa, land is owned by a few prevailed individual who may or may not be using it for sufficient food production. Traditional land ownership does not encourage co-operation amongst the farmers. To make matters worse, farmers on limited land again these smallholdings are fragmented making commercial farming impossible.

The poor transport network amongst the African countries explains why there is rampant famine in Africa. Food production in Africa is based in remote areas and isolated communities which lack good feeder roads to link to markets and consumption areas. Thus, surplus foodstuffs cannot be easily moved from areas of abundance to areas of scarcity. It is not surprising therefore, to find a district experiencing famine when in another they have food in plenty.

The existence of subsistence sector of agriculture especially for food crops always contributes to famine in Africa. In most cases farmers produce for consumption but at the same time due to poverty they sell some of the small produce causing famine.

Natural factors

Reception of bad rains in different parts of Africa partly explains the outbreak of famine. These rains are destructive in two ways. First, they destroy crops through hailstone and the stored food is washed away by the rains. Thus, creating the famine conditions. The elnino rains make roads impassable and also wash away bridges like what happened recently in Teso, Mbale and Karamoja. A similar situation happened in Mozambique Somalia thus resulting into food shortage.

Pests and diseases in Africa have had a negative bearing on food quantities and qualities. They have affected livestock in pastoral communities for example, in Nigeria among the Fulani, Botswana, Kenya and Uganda especially among the Karimajongs.. crops such as maize, sorghum, millet, beans, cassava and soybeans grown in the dry margins are often destroyed by pests leading to low food production.

Drought in some regions of Africa has caused famine. Prolonged droughts result into low food production. For instance, the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti) has experienced this problem since the early 1970's. The Sahel region of West Africa (Mali, Chad and Niger) has not been an exception. Low food production arising from drought has led to the famine and hunger crisis in Africa.

Landslides in Africa have partly led to famine. These have destroyed crops, property and have displaced people in hilly and mountainous areas such as East African highlands, Ethiopian highlands, Tibesti highlands, Alas and Drankensburg.

Tropical storms also explain the outbreak of famine in some parts of Africa. These storms also called Cyclones often cause massive destruction of crops and property when they blow across the African continent. This has been common along the western coast of Africa.

Volcanic activities also explain the outbreak of famine in some parts of Africa. They have led to the displacement of people from their home areas to other areas where they cannot easily find food. The most recent volcanic eruptions have occurred in the Virunga volcanoes in DRC.

Infertile soils in some parts of Africa cause famine three fifth of African continents is a desert. The rest is characterized by large areas of poor soils that have low capacity to produce adequate food.

Effects of famine and hunger in Africa

Famine has led to increased poverty resulting from the inability of households to save as the little incomes are all directed to buying food.

Has led to increased debt burden among African countries. The governments often seek huge loans from international financial institutions to strengthen the structures and programmes on food.

Has perpetuated over dependences of African countries on developed nations for foreign aid to meet the food shortage. This has propagated neo-colonialism in Africa.

Has disrupted economic development programmes because governments are forced to direct resources from other priority areas such as industry into agriculture.

Has led to increased environment degradation as affected families are left with no alternatives but to exploit fragile land s for farming so as to survive. For instance, wetlands, hill slopes and fallow areas re re-opened for farming. This is true with districts of Kabale, Namutumba, Budaka, Butalejja, Mbale and many others.

Has led to increased child abuse for example, young girls are forced to marry in return for food. Some young girls sell themselves so as to get food. This has been common in Northern Uganda where people have been concentrated in camps.

Status of the African populace most children suffer from malnutrition developing pot-like stomachs and are stunted in growth. There is also maternal undernourishment resulting into birth of underweight babies.

Has encouraged rural-urban migration many people tent to move to towns in an effort to

find means of survival. This may result into overcrowding in towns slums development poor urbanization and massive urban unemployment.

Famine and hunger crisis has served as a soft spot of which external political groups have taken advantage disguise as relief agencies to come and destabilize famine affected countries.

Famine has led to deterioration in the quality of households labour in terms of physical performance thus leading to reduced productivity of households.

Has led to civil conflicts, lawlessness and loss of confidence in some African leaders. For example, the 1974 coup in Ethiopia was partly a result of food shortage.

Has constrained government budgets on social services in the provision of food supplies, medicine and others.

Outbreak of famine in Africa has contributed to high rate of school dropouts. No child can accept to continue with studies on empty stomach.

Has led to unequal distribution of income. The disparity between the rural poor affected by famine and the rich tend to widen this undermines economic development goals.

Has led to increased mortality rate in Africa.

Steps that should be taken to minimize the problem of famine and hunger in Africa.

Famine has been a chronic challenge to new state especially those in the Sahel region. To minimize famine, hunger and starvation in Africa, the following steps should be taken.

Poverty eradication programmes should be adopted by Africans, targeting to raise rural income programmes like rural electrification, feeder roads, co-operative movements and water for production can raise household's income and hence, increase their capacity to overcome famine.

Efforts towards constitutional rule, good governance and nationalism should be undertaken by African leaders to minimize frequent civil wars and coups. This can reduce the problems of IDPSA, refugees, and therefore enable people to settle down for agricultural production.

Small-scale irrigation should be adopted to reduce the effect of drought on the crop performance. These dams if managed by farmers can help farmers even those in dry areas to raise crops all the year around.

Governments should provide the farmers with improved seeds, agricultural machinery and intermediate technology.

Improved breeds should be extended to the pastoral areas so as to increase on the production of animal feeds. Besides cattle rearing the pastoral areas should also engage in crop growing to increase food security in case of drought.

Programmes for sustainable use of land should be put in place. For instance land consolidation, mixed farming, fallowing, mixed cropping, agro-forestry among others should be used for sustainable food production.

People in fragile environments vulnerable to landslides and erosion should be resettled into areas with more agricultural potential.

Family planning techniques should be adopted so as to match population growth with the development of resources. This will reduce strain on existing land in the provision of food.

Anti-drought programmes such as forestation, conservation of water catchments areas and agro-forestry should be adopted.

Reservoirs should be constructed to contain increased volume of water in rivers during the wet season so as to control floods and provide water for irrigation. This promotes production of food throughout the year.

Farmers should be assisted with credit facilities (loans) improve on their production and maintain soil fertility.

Policies for rural agricultural transformation such as raising rural-saving and investments: maintaining security, land ownership and others should be adopted so as to achieve self-sufficiency in food production.

Land under good production should be expanded. Africa still has large areas of land in the equatorial region. These include forests, swamps, marshes and other wet lands. Agro-forestry should be adopted with clear concern with environmental balance in the eco system.

Modern storage facilities and preservation techniques which can help in preserving both the traditional foods like fish, meat and the non-traditional foods like fruits, vegetables, cereals should be encouraged.

African farmers should be taught the timing of proper planting periods to plan ahead and be dynamic to weather changes and seasons. The weather focusing departments on the African continent should try to study and have perfect predictions for the farmers.

Governments should consider giving support in establishment of agro-based industries for the manufacture of foodstuffs. This would avoid wastage of agricultural raw materials during time of harvest and plenty.

African governments should fight corruption especially in agricultural ministries so that agricultural funding programmes can achieve or meet its objectives.

Disaster preparedness schemes should be launched and funded by respective African governments. Therefore, that incase of any disaster such as floods, droughts, diseases and generally, famine farmers can be assisted in any way or another.

Local and international relief agencies should be quick to respond to famine disaster in Africa and give enough food aid to the starving population. In this case, the Red Cross and World food programmes should quickly respond to the famine problem in Africa.

African farmers should adopt a diversification policy. They should therefore stop relying on particular food crops. Variety of crops should be grown such that failure of one of them can be compensated by others.

Agricultural research and organizations and personnel should establish their headquarters in rural areas and effectively educate farmers on application of scientific methods of agricultural production for better food crop yields.

SAMPLE ESSAYS

Capital punishment is the form of punishment meted to convicted criminals whose offences are the most serious, thus at the top of any list of offences; those that call for the most extreme punishment which is death. Life imprisonment, decapitation, hanging, firing squad, electrocution or lethal injections are some of the methods capital punishment is meted.

The purpose for capital punishment includes retribution, deterrence against violence, and protection of society; it is a tragic but necessary duty of government. However is it said to be barbaric, discriminatory, and counterproductive, hence calls for its abolition in Uganda.

Christian proponents and opponents of capital punishment both use the Bible to support their position. Opponents point out that the Lord did not kill some of the best-known murderers in the Bible. The stories of Cain (Gen: 4), Moses (Exodus: 2) and David (2 Sam: 11-12), for example show God's attitude towards even first-degree murderers to be in favour of life, not death.

Advocates of capital punishment usually believe that it is God's way for human governments to punish serious offenders. The two major texts these advocates use, Genesis 9: 1-17 and Romans 13: 1-15 carry weight.

Retribution is that which is given or exacted in return for a wrong done. Society is justly ordered when each person receives what is due to them. Deserved punishment protects society morally by restoring this just order, making the wrong doer pay a price equivalent to the harm done. In other words, a penalty should fit the crime and must not exceed it. If this is given as the chief purpose of capital punishment, a murderer deserves to die.

According to opponents of capital punishment, retribution that involves the killing of a human being decreases the value of human life in a society. Rather than an act of vengeance, a length, prison term, even life imprisonment is adequate retribution for serious crimes. Christian opponents of death penalty add that a spirit of exact retaliation smacks more of revenge than of justice and is thus ruled out by the New Testament teaching on forgiveness, mercy and concern for the rehabilitation of the offender.

Another possible purpose of capital punishment is deterrence. Proponents argue that death penalty deters would-be capital offenders. People fear nothing more than death. Therefore, nothing will deter a criminal more than the fear of death. Life in prison is less feared. Murderers clearly prefer it to execution. Abolitionists, however, claim that as the number of legal executions increases in a society, so does the number of capital offenders. This is so because government-approved killing actually brutalizes society and lowers the perceived valve of human life.

Opponents of the death penalty also claim that the theory of deterrence assumes that most murders are premeditated so that would-be murderers weigh the pro and cons of their intended action. Since the majority of murders are committed in the anger and turmoil of the moment, thoughts of the death penalty do not affect the killer.

Defenders of capital punishment cite the protection of society from identified murderers as another purpose. They argue that it is justifiable, and in some cases even necessary to kill a murderer to prevent that person from taking more lives. If the killer is spared and he kills again, the government may bear some responsibility, at least indirectly, for the death of the victims. Opponents of this line of reasoning reply that while an executed person will not kill again, his death only devalues life further, and this indirectly encourages more murders.

Among numerous objections to capital punishment is the charge of discrimination. Statistics consistently indicate that a higher proportion of criminals who are less-educated and poor are sentenced to death than those who are well-educated or economically sufficient. This objection is however, quashed by the defenders of capital punishment who argue that even though some inequalities do exist in the judicial process, justice nevertheless demands that society punish the guilty; reform of the justice system, not abolition of capital punishment, is the answer to the problem of inequalities.

Another objection to capital punishment pertains to the economic cost. When the expense of all appeals is added to the cost of the initial trial, executing a prisoner is actually more expensive than imprisoning him for life. Defenders of capital punishment, however, reply that if justice were meted out more swiftly and carefully, fewer appeals and delays could lower the costs.

Conclusively, the fate of convicted offenders should depend on what new studies reveal about capital punishment, how the media cover the issue, which view seems politically advantageous and viewing the whole issue in a context of neighbor-love, guided by justice and mercy.

Discuss the dangerous global trends threatening the family and morality around the world, including Uganda.

The family is a social institution that binds two or more individuals into a primary group. It is an essential pillar upon which all societies are built. Morality on the other hand is conformity to the rules of right conduct.

Evidence is all around us that the family and morality are less important. Marriage rates are declining, the age of marriage is rising and divorce rates are rising. Out-of-wedlock births are growing. Abortion is rising and becoming increasingly legal. We see lower birth rates, unequal relationships and many times, a career gains importance over the family. All those have put the family institution in danger.

Many of the youth around the world, Uganda inclusive are losing confidence in the institution of marriage. They are placing more and more value on education and less importance on forming an eternal family. Many do not see forming families as a faith-based work. For them, it is a selection process much like shopping. Many also distrust their own moral strength and the moral strength of their peers. Because temptations are so fierce, many are not sure they can be successful in keeping covenants.

Today, many youth have insufficient and under developed social skills which are an impedediment to forming eternal families. They are increasingly adept at talking to someone eighty kilometers away through face book, Twitter, What's app and other

forms of social media and less able to carry on conversation with people in the same room. That makes it's difficult for them to socialize with each other.

Another factor that is undermining kinship-based family structures is the prevalence of single parenthood, particularly among the young urban females. As increasing numbers of women have joined the labour force, single and female-headed households have become a discernible pattern on the Ugandan social landscape yet children are entitled to birth within the bounds of matrimony and to be reared by a father and mother who honour marital vows with complete fidelity.

The movement to promote same-sex marriages (homosexuality) as an inherent or constitutional right has gained notable ground in recent years. Redefining marriage in this way weakens the institution. A marriage is a convent, or promise that a man and a woman make to each other and to God vowing to remain faithful to one another and to God for eternity and to live in ways that contribute to happy and successful family life (having children for posterity). Homosexuality has bred a lot of chaos and controversy all over the world and the ideal marriage life is being torn apart.

Pressures placed on family life from unemployment are great and have a strong impact on the well-being of relationships. Unemployment not only has the effect of causing financial hardships but also lowers self-esteem, creates isolation and limits the ability of families to lead fulfilling lives in the community. Similarly, at the other end of the spectrum other families, due to financial pressure and fear of losing employment, are working longer hours with a consequent reduction in the time for family.

The influence of the feminist agenda of equality has made the style of relationships in families change. The traditional roles of earlier generations have become more diverse. Conflict and break down occur when one of the other partner changes and the other does not understand how to renegotiate their role within a relationship.

Modern negative images of marriage undermine family stability, hence threatening the institution and morality. Society has become ambivalent (and possibly even hostile) towards marriage. One of the reasons for marriage's marginal status is a hitting license, that violence and abuse are typical. Consequently, many potential marriage partners stay unmarried for a long time or end up living single lives.

Additionally, it is a fact that cohabitation is a mutinous behavioural trend threatening the institution of marriage and morality around the world, Uganda inclusive. As the number of cohabiting couples has increased, the inhibitions attached to such a way of life have waned. Today it has almost become normal for people of marriageable age to live together and begin begetting children before legalizing their union. The fact that their union is not legalized or religiously blessed deprives them of enormous emotional and moral support. This situation comes to a litmus test in the moment of sickness, relationship tussles and unforeseen crisis.

Public policies are being made every day that are antifamily and the definition of family and morality is changing legally around the world. Pornography is rampant, targeting mostly young women. Parents are being portrayed as inept and out of touch with the modern times.

In a world where marriage is deemed as irrelevant or unnecessary, and viewed as a temporary commitment more likely to end in divorce than not, strong and stable families, headed by a father and a mother should be the anchor of society. When marriage is

undermined by gender confusion and by distortions of its God-given meaning, the rising generation of children and youth will find it difficult to develop their natural identities as men and women. Some will find it difficult to engage in wholesome courtships, form stable marriages and raise another generation imbued with moral strength and purpose.

How can the rampant strikes in Ugandan secondary schools be averted?
The media is always awash with disturbing news about a wave of strikes that normally rock secondary schools across the country, to the point that forces some Districts to close all the Secondary Schools prematurely. The causes range from poor feeding to poor sanitation, refusal by school authorities to offer entertainment programmes and other forms of maladministration by school heads.

That morality among students has gone to the dogs in no doubt. This could be attributed to African cultural erosion, hence drug abuse, alcoholism, intolerance, disrespect aping western culture, among others

The main purpose of school is to provide learners with an educational foundation from which they can build successful independent lives. However, disruption in the classroom causes road blocks to student achievement. Maintaining discipline in schools is essential in creating an effective learning environment.

While instilling values of integrity, ethics, moral leadership, spiritual awakening, tolerance and entrepreneurship is key in improving discipline a more holistic approach should be adopted to mitigate social evils blighting secondary schools. This may include: increasing parental involvement ,creating and enforcing a school wide discipline plan, fostering discipline through leadership, practicing effective follow through providing alternative educational opportunities, building a reputation for fairness, implementing educational effective school wide policies and maintaining high expectations.

Parents truly make a difference in student achievement and behaviour. Schools should institute a policy where teachers are required to contact parents periodically through the year. Half-term or end-of-term reports are often not enough. A parent cannot solve an issue if they do not know it exists.

Discipline plans are a way to provide students with a consistent and fair plan of what will happen if they misbehave. While many schools have a discipline plan in the books, it is often not well known or followed by teachers and administrators. Having it posted in every classroom and in hallways is a good way to start.

The head teachers and their deputies are of major importance in fostering an academically focused school-wide environment. Their actions form the basis of the overall mood for the school. If they are consistent in supporting teachers, implementing the discipline plan, and following through on disciplinary actions, then teachers will follow their lead. On the other hand, if they are lax on discipline, this will become apparent over time and misbehaviour will increase.

Students need to be placed in situations where they are best able to learn without distracting the wider school community. Alternative schools can help remove students from volatile situations. Even moving students to new classes which can be controlled at the school level can help in some situations. If one student is disrupting a class and after numerous intervention attempts has shown an unwillingness to change, then

Hand in hand with effective leadership and school wide consistent follow through is the belief by students that teachers and administrators are fair in their disciplinary actions. While there are sometimes extenuating circumstances that require administrators to make adjustments for individual students, overall students who misbehave should be treated similarly.

Effective discipline begins with the implementation of school housekeeping policies that all teachers must follow. For example, if a school implements a tardy policy that all teachers and administrators follow, tardies will decrease. If, instead, teachers are expected to handle this individually, some will do a better job than others and tardies will have a tendency to increase.

From administrators to guidance counselors to teachers, schools must institute high expectations for both academic achievement and behaviour. These expectations must include messages of encouragement and means of support to help all children succeed. Michael Rutter researched on the effect of high expectations at school and reported his findings in the book, *Fifteen Hundred Hours*: "schools that foster high self-esteem and that promote social and scholastic success reduce the likelihood of emotional and behavioural disturbance"

Adapted from an article written by Aboko Richard, published in of 1st August, 2013 and

In a bid to respond to the pressure and expectations for high academic performance, repeating classes is a common practice in Uganda.

Education reports estimate the repetition rate of learners at 12% to 15%. Weak students are often advised to repeat classes in the hope that their performance will improve yet there is no scientific evidence to back the expectation.

Local studies show that students lose interest when asked to repeat classes. This contributes to a high dropout rate, causing financial loss to the parents and government. Global research has not found any benefits of repeating classes. An Australian study, for example found that repeating did not improve students' performance in any way, whether academically or behaviourally at any level of education.

Students who repeated were found to have a 20% to 50% higher likely hood of dropping out of school compared to those with similar levels of achievement who were promoted to the next class with other peers.

Behaviour of students who are normally forced to repeat classes deteriorates; they suffer low self-esteem, develop negative perceptions about school, leading to increased risk of failure.

It may, however be sensible for a student to repeat a class if the reasons for the student's difficulties are well understood and appropriate arrangements are in place to deal with those difficulties in the repeated class.

Repeating a class may also be understandable if the student is chronologically youn for their current class or if the learner is immature for their chronological age and the are plans to help develop maturity during the year of the repeated class.