

Food Aid And Its Contextual Influence Among Residents Of Turkana County, Kenya

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Abstract: Food aid has become a major mechanism for stabilizing domestic supplies in food-insecure countries and targeting food supply to alleviate hunger and food insecurity. Few studies document how food aid has been contextualized by the residents. This study is therefore aimed to understand food aid and its contextual influence among residents of Turkana County. This study adopted a case design which was guided by social construction theory. The potential study participants were identified from households that were beneficiaries of food aid and sampled using snowballing technique to saturation at 45 households. Participants' data was collected using in-depth and key-informant interviews as well as focus group discussions. The recorded information was then transcribed and analyzed thematically. This study reports that food aid is understood differently in various contexts from the household, village and national level. It can be concluded that food insecurity and resultant food aid is a major source of household conflict. There is need for enhanced community participation by humanitarian organizations, strengthened auditing initiatives on humanitarian organizations, diversification of income sources among residents of As a policy implication, the findings of this study demonstrate that there is need for legal, legislative and societal reforms on communal understanding of food aid and adoption of existing coping strategies. The theoretical implication of these study findings is that social construction theories are useful in the understanding of food insecurity as a social problem. Socially constructed meanings influence human behavior creating the need to deconstruct the meanings that societies bestow on food aid as an initial stage in mitigating food insecurity.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Food Summit (1996) definite food insecurity a situation where a household's members do not have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Aiga & Dhur, 2006). However, this definition does not factor in disparity in the subjective definition of food insecurity in various sociocultural and economic settings. Other authors (Oino, 2018) argue that food insecurity does not only denote lack of food but also includes what people define as food contextually.

Because of this, the World Food Programme(WFP) defines most countries within Sub-Saharan Africa as food

insecure, a situation that is compounded by high poverty level making the residents unable to afford their minimum calorie intake requirements for a healthy and active life (CSA, 2014). Most governments and non-state agencies have been involved in various intervention programs to mitigate the impact of food insecurity. One of the common interventions is the provision of food aid to vulnerable groups (FAO.2008; Kareithi,2014).

The reason for providing food aid is to protect the most vulnerable communities from adverse impacts of food insecurity (Radelet, 2006; Pankaj, 2005; UNDP, 2005). In the distribution of food, the food aid can be generally distributed to the deserving vulnerable populations or FAO deploys various commodification strategies to ensure a reduction in food insecurity. Because of the endemic food insecurity in

most arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya, food aid has been institutionalized. This not only creates over-dependence of the target community to food aid but also affect their traditional coping strategies to food insecurity. This is because the specific households develop a sense that they are not able to meet immediate food needs without external assistance (Lentz *et al.*, 2005). This in turn may affect their behavior and social relationships (Lentz *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, although food aid was supposed to mitigate emergency food security situations, over time it has turned into an international enterprise whereby international exporters of food and food-products dump their surplus production to food distributors such as FAO and World Food Program.

At the national level, food aid is used to support livelihoods with the aim of assisting assets with the aim of recovery. However, food aid has not been provided on the scale and for the duration needed for the livelihood support. The triggers of food insecurity especially in ASALs have never been adequately addressed by donors of food aid and most importantly, food aid alone cannot achieve sustainable livelihoods or even livelihood recovery. As a consequence, food aid alone acts as a catalyst for further marginalization of recipients in terms of food security (The Sphere Project, 2004). This affects how Turkana residents contextualize food aid.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was undertaken in Turkwel ward, Loima Sub-County of Turkana County. Turkwel ward was purposively selected as the case study for Turkana County as it is spatially the largest in the county and majority of its residents suffer from food insecurity and benefit from food aid.

This study adopted a case study research design using Turkwel Ward in Loima Constituency as a case of Turkana County. This design was adopted because the study was interested in providing an in-depth understanding of household definition of food aid and food insecurity as well as commodification and livelihood coping strategies in the wake of food insecurity.

This study targeted the heads of household who had benefitted from food aid from humanitarian organizations and government agencies. The potential study participants were identified from households that were beneficiaries of food aid and sampled using snowballing technique to saturation at 45 households.

In selecting participants for this study, the researcher used snowball sampling technique. In this case, the researcher made some contacts with one household in Turkwel that had the required characteristics and diversities required for this study; that is, they were households within Turkwel Ward, beneficiary of food aid. After gaining their consent and interviewing them, they later helped the researcher in identifying other participants. They later also led the researcher to other households which had the required characteristics. When the researcher achieved a point of saturation, interviewing households stopped because the researcher was getting the same information that was repeated by households. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) propose that

saturation often occurs around 12 participants in homogenous groups. Consequently, 15 as a minimum for most qualitative interview studies works very well when the participants are homogenous. To ensure that you have achieved saturation, you have to go beyond the point of saturation to make sure that no new major concepts emerge in the next few interviews or observations (Latham, 2013). The researcher therefore managed to interview 45 households (where a point of saturation was achieved) who accepted to be interviewed though they claimed that the researcher should not share any information related to their households, vulnerability and how they perceive the food aid organizations and government since they might be locked out of the food aid.

Prior to study commencement, an introductory letter from Moi University was sent to the National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI) in order to secure a research permit. Once the permit was issued, the researcher was able to conduct the study after obtaining permissions from the governor of Turkana County and County Commissioner. To collect the data, the researcher relied on qualitative methods for data collection. Qualitative research is an interpretative approach, which attempts to gain insight into the specific meanings and behaviours experienced in a certain social phenomenon through the subjective experiences of the participants. Mason, (2002) notes that qualitative research methods allow the researcher to go into the depth of the participant's experience, social processes and discourses. The researcher therefore relied on qualitative methods. The researcher was able to collect data which was in-depth and inclusive. In-depth conversational interviews were adopted to collect data from households which were selected through snowball sampling. Data for this study was also collected through focus group discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview (KII) sessions.

Data from the household interview guides and FGD was recorded using a tape recorder and field notes. After data collection, the researcher conducted data cleaning which involved correcting errors and inaccurate responses, completing incomplete sentences. This helped in improving the quality of the responses obtained from the interview schedules. The interviews were transcribed and translated from Turkana language to English. The researcher took time read and reread severally. After getting clarity and consistency, themes were grouped and attached with corresponding narratives. The analysis involved coding of data, dividing the text into smaller units, phrases, sentence and paragraphs assigning a label to each unit and grouping the codes into themes, then the researcher analysed the themes (Creswell and Clark 2011). The researcher thematically analysed data based on narratives on food aid, coping mechanisms and social relationships influence food aid. Concepts from different FGDs and interviews were then pooled together and integrated into common themes. Emerging themes were similar across both FGDs and in-depth interviews. In data analysis there are no universal processes of data analysis rather it is a rigorous, complex and messy (Jwan and Ongondo 2011) but a process of transcribing, editing and reporting the data in the manner that makes it accessible and easily understood by the readers after analysis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Food aid and its contextual influence among residents in Turkana County is understood at the individual, community and national level.

A. INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

At the individual level, social relationships have been affected by food aid. This can be seen in the deteriorating relationships at the household level. This was seen in the deteriorating family structure.

a. FAMILY WAY OF LIFE AND RELATING WITH RELATIVES

Relationship is a way of life among the Turkana. Household respondents indicated that the family way of life and relating well with neighbors has been affected by food aid.

Awoi, 38 years, Female, a household respondent indicated that

The availability of food brings visitors to the household. When food is not available, people tend to avoid that household and associate themselves to households that can be accommodated. Relief food is now days treated as food, therefore, a household that does not receive food aid loses visitors and this deteriorates the social relationships.

Ekitela, 42 years, Male a FGD Participant stated that:

We rely on food aid. When food is not available, we lose friends and relatives because we are regarded as useless and people who do not have food.

Paul, 50 years, Male, a key informant from National Government indicated that:

When food is not available, many people are not received in that household. No one wants to identify with a household that does not have food. This affects how people relate in that household.

b. DECISION MAKING AND GENDER RELATIONS

Women have taken an active role in providing food at the household. They are the ones who are providing the food that is a role usually played by men. This makes men poor decision makers in the household and affects the relationships.

Aitekang, 32, Female Household respondent explained that

Women are now the ones taking food to the households. Men who are supposed to provide it have nothing to give. This has changed men role as head of household. This has made women household decision makers because they have all the resources required.

Lokitela, 40, Male, Household respondent agreed and said that

We are no longer the men we use to be. Power has gone to women who have all the resources. We follow what they say or else we are denied food from food aid organizations.

Peter, 40, a Key Informant also agreed and indicated that

Women are empowered. They get money from different avenues. They operate small businesses. Men are seen as useless and worthless because they have nothing to bring back

home. This therefore makes them vulnerable and depend on women. This affects the gender relations and decision making at the household level.

c. ROLES DISINTEGRATION

When the family gets a little maize from Government relief programmes or well-wishers, they are forced to share it with their emaciated livestock. The households argued that they usually look for a means of survival. They send the young children and the aged to the nearest shopping centre to beg so that the well-wishers can have mercy of them.

Nakine, 35 years, Female, a household respondent indicated that

We have defined roles as a community. The roles are now changing due to drought. Children are now beggars in the nearest towns. We also beg from neighbors when we do not have food. This begging has changed the roles of men and women in the society.

Lokitela, 42 years, Male a FGD Participant agreed that:

Our self-esteem, role definition has changed nowadays because men and women are not performing the roles which are traditionally defined. In some families, its either Women or Children who fend for the families.

James, 50 years, Male, a key informant from National Government indicated that:

Roles are changing every time. You will see women here being active looking for food for the families. This has changed the relationships based on the roles at the household level.

d. MOBILITY OF MEN

Members of Turkana community get cultural prestige and wealth from the animals they keep. When animals die due to drought, Men become desperate and now depend on NGOs and Government for survival. Their self-esteem and pride is reduced because they do not have animals to take care of. They resort to moving to urban centres to wait for food aid.

Awoi, 38, Female household insinuated that

The dependence on food aid according to the household respondents has influenced social relationships at the household. Our Men have become mobile like animals. They follow us to distribution centres for food.

Akai, 30, an FGD Participant agreed that

We are all the same. We have become mobile with our goats. We have no option but move with our animals to look for food aid. This has affected our social relationships as households.

James, 42, a key informant agreed with the sentiments and said that

Men also migrate with their wives to look for food. Nothing special with mobility because no one can stay at home waiting for food. They have to look for the nearest centre so that they can also be targeted for food distribution.

e. HOUSEHOLD GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Turkana get prestige and wealth from the animals they keep according to the culture. When animals die due to

drought, Men become desperate and now depend on NGOs and Government for survival.

Asinyen, 40 years, Female, a household respondent indicated that

Our men do not have work to do for them to feed the families. They also wait for food aid which we get from the NGOs. When food is brought to the household, it is not sometimes of the quantity that will feed everyone. A Priority is given to children and the aged. This has caused conflicts at the household level. We scold and molest them leading to violence.

Ewoi, 42 years, Male a FGD Participant agreed that

We fight for food. Who can stay hungry yet food is available? Women have become bread winners and this has caused conflict.

John, 48 years, Male, a key informant from National Government indicated that

The household relationships are affected by food aid. Conflicts are caused by scrambling for the little food and it graduates to fights at the household. We cannot solve household cases which we are told they are associated with food.

f. BEGGING

According to the respondents, begging is one way of getting meals for the household. This habit of begging affects how people interact and relate at the household level

According to Nanyait, 34 years, Female, a household respondent indicated:

We usually go to the neighbors to beg for food when we do not have. When the family gets a little maize from Government relief programmes or well-wishers, they are forced to share it with their neighbors and emaciated livestock. This begging is not taken lightly. It causes disharmony when food is not shared to the beggars. This has caused much conflicts and poor social relationships among households.

Asinyen, 46 years, a FGD participant argued that:

We usually look for a means of survival. We send the young children and the aged to the nearest shopping centre to beg so that the well-wishers can have mercy on them. We usually target households which show a lighting fire which is usually an indication that some food is being cooked.

When the beggars are lucky, they can come with something that is shared by all household members. When they are not lucky, we sleep hungry and pray that the NGOs respond to our predicaments at the expected time.

The role of men in the household is now shifted to the kids who are part of the begging. This causes more conflicts and affects how household members relate.

Ewoi, 42 years, Male an FGD Participant reiterated that:

When a woman in a household receives food, it shows that She has become a source of food in that household. Food aid exacerbates a social action whereby a woman sees herself as a source of food because she is the one who takes part in receiving and carrying food to the household.

John, 48 years, Male, a key informant from National Government indicated that:

It is the women who usually receive food during distribution. Begging is a common phenomenon when you have nothing. This begging habit according to me creates enmity.

g. VULNERABILITY CREATED

Food aid has caused vulnerability among the recipients. They have become dependent on aid such that they cannot think of the other available option. This has affected the relationships at the household level.

According to Asibitar, 25 Female household respondent,

My husband has developed a culture of depending on relief food aid. He goes to the drinking spree when the aid is not available. When food is cooked, women decide to eat with kids because the husbands do not bring any food for the family. It is like the women are taking roles of being breadwinners. This has affected the social relationships and has caused conflicts at the households and makes the household vulnerable.

Lowoi, 40 a FDG respondent indicated that

Our Lives rely on relief food. We have lost power and we have nothing to do about it. This has made us vulnerable and dependent on food aid.

John, 40, an NGO Key Informant said that

There is suspicion among community members. They feel useless because they being suppressed by women. According to them, they have become vulnerable because of food aid and reliance on women.

B. COMMUNITY LEVEL

At the community level, social relationships among community members is affected. This is caused by dependence on food aid which has acted as a push to reduction and relations among community members. This was explained by households as shown below;

a. FOOD AID AND COOPERATION AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

According to the household respondents, food aid organizations do not aim at working together with the households in the achievement of sustainable livelihoods. They do not lay groundwork for social institutions and therefore leading to the deteriorating relationship between people hence affecting the social relationships and communal working relationships.

According to Akai, 43 years, Female, a household respondent:

Food aid organizations and government singlehandedly make decisions on behalf of the aid recipients. They choose what food to provide and who should benefit. They have never consulted households on preferred foods and changing eating habits. They actually do not cooperate because they see us as illiterate and befit food aid. This causes poor social relations.

Ewoi, 42 years, Male a FGD Participant agreed that:

We have our traditional coping mechanisms which can be capitalized by this organizations so that we can no longer depend on aid because we will have sustainable projects.

When herds dwindle, men are increasingly relying on their wives, many of whom depend on selling local alcohol or sell charcoal. They buy maize flour and oil with the sale proceeds. The quantities are very small. This situation has led to dependency. The dependency of women to men is culturally not accepted. If the organizations can consult us, we can provide better solutions through cooperation. The lack of cooperation and working together is a bottle neck to the achievement of food insecurity. It also causes poor social relations because the households feel ignored.

Peter, 50 Years, a key informant from NGO

Households have had to depend on food aid. This causes dependency syndrome because they always focus on anticipation of food aid. The beneficiary households depend on external assistance because they are not consulted on their needs. This reduces engagement in other livelihood activities that could enable them to become food self-sufficient. This is attributed to lack of cooperation and working together with beneficiaries so that they can provide own solutions which can be adopted

b. FOOD AID AND ACCOMMODATION AT THE HOUSEHOLD

Food aid has aided accommodation at the household levels. It brings about an agreement on something that households that do not have. This impacts the rate of how people relate as households and at the community.

Akai, 43 years, Female, a household respondent indicated that:

The availability of food brings visitors to the household. When food is not available, people tend to avoid that household and associate themselves to households that can be accommodated. Relief food is now days treated as food, therefore, a household that does not receive food aid loses visitors and this deteriorates the social relationships.

Ewoi, 42 years, Male an FGD Participant agreed that:

We have friends and relatives when we have food from the organizations. Food attracts beggars and friends. It has become a means of building relationships at the community level. People would wish to associate with households that receive food. When households have visitors and yet they cannot get food, the move to the nearest village where they can be rescued and be fed properly. This food has affected our networking and how we accommodate our visitors. This in turn affects social relationships because it has increased and the same time decreased visitors.

John, 48 years, Male, a key informant from National Government indicated that:

The household's relationships is affected by food aid. Not all households receive the aid. Some receive and some do not receive. The ones that receive aid are under pressure to share the little they get. When you don't share, you are branded as a bad person. This causes enemy and it affects the relationship. This food aid in away has been an agent of accommodation because it dictates whether you can be accepted or not based on your generosity in sharing the aid received at the household level or it creates conflict and hatred at the household level and at the community level.

c. FOOD AID AND SOCIAL EXCHANGE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

According to the households, food aid is the cause of lack of the existing social exchange at the community level.

Akai, 43 years, Female, a household respondent indicated that:

I have to sell my goat because just like me it has nothing to eat; I don't have money to feed my family and only that goat, which is very thin, is my wealth. Now I have turned it (pointing at a tethered goat) into money to buy food. We sell goats as a means of exchange to get money for buying food.

Food aid has also provided food that we sell so that we get enough money that can be used for buying. The lack of food for exchange to get money is affecting our lives because we lack money that will help us in buying items required at the household.

Ewoi, 42 years, a male FGD Participant agreed that:

The social behavior of people is influenced by the exchange process. The exchange of food aid is to maximize benefits in terms of money generated out of sell of food aid to substitute the household economy by increasing income inform of money that can be used at the household level. This increases the level of people interaction and affects the frequency of interaction.

John, 48 years, Male, a key informant from National Government indicated that:

Food aid is used as a form of exchange. Barter trade of food aid affects how people interact. It affects the social relationships by increasing interactions and support the community level.

d. FOOD AID AND COMPETITION AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

According to the respondents, food aid brings about the contest between beneficiaries, food aid handlers who strive for a goal that cannot be shared causing psychological stress and conflict. This competition affects how households interact and their social relationships.

Akai, 43 years, Female, a household respondent indicated that

We usually compete when we queue for food. No one is ready to miss food because we usually do not know who will get it and who will miss in the ration. Do you expect us to wait for food while seated? No way. This competition leads to deteriorating social relationships and grudges when people fight for space.

Ewoi, 42 years, Male a FGD Participant agreed that

People fight and a times lack order during food distribution. The conflict also happens when the wrong names are found in the list leading to fights. This affects household relationships because they are branded as betrayers or people with self-interest.

John, 48 years, Male, a key informant from National Government indicated that

No order during distribution. The targeting sometimes leads to competition for the small slots available which should be given to the vulnerable and the most affected. When the Community realizes that some people were given priority and

others were ignored, it creates a conflict between the beneficiaries and the food aid organization.

e. *EROSION OF CULTURE*

It was noted that the respondents listen to news and some see newspapers. The respondents also said that they usually see the images of emaciated Turkana children and animals in the Television news.

Asekon, 43 years, Female, a household respondent indicated that:

When images are splashed all over media, we are branded as useless people. We are seen as worthless and always depending on food aid. Though it is true, this is affecting our culture and it has caused erosion of our taboos. This is a way is affecting our social relationships.

Ekile, 42 years, Male a FGD Participant agreed that:

We are not happy when the organizations are using us to gain support and funding. This is destroying our culture and social relationships.

John, 48 years, Male, a key informant from National Government indicated that:

The dependency syndrome is affecting the Turkana Culture. Most of them are now moving to urban centres to wait for aid. They are no longer focused on pastoralism. This is eroding the culture and affecting social relationships.

f. *IDENTITY AND COMMUNAL GATHERINGS AND CELEBRATIONS*

Food aid has affected community gatherings and celebrations. It has weaned people of the livelihoods they have been used to traditionally.

According to Asibitar, 25, Female household respondent,

No communal life is practiced nowadays. Everyone tries on how to make ends meet individually without bothering how others survive. This has affected our communal life.

Lokidor, 40 Male FGD participant agreed and said that

We do not work together nowadays. We do not participate in our traditional dances. No community celebrations these days. This is affecting social relationships among community members.

James, 35 Key Informant indicated that

Selfishness has become a habit among households receiving food aid. They are turning to be individualistic. This is not a habit among the Turkanas. This food aid has made people change the way of life and in away affecting social relationships.

C. NATIONAL LEVEL

Nationally, the social relationships are impacted through the organizations providing food aid and trickles down to the beneficiaries

a. *LEAD ORGANIZATION RIVALRY*

There is usually politics of who is the lead organization to provide food aid in different places. This conflict causes

ripples among the organizations and it affects the beneficiaries and the relationships of the organizations.

According to Asibitar, 40 Female respondent,

We hear that the organizations fight for who should bring food aid to us. This causes infights between them and we are affected because of the delay. The relationships in the choice of the lead organization should be taken into consideration so that we are not affected.

Ewoi, 42, Male FGD Respondent agreed with the household sentiments and indicated that

We are not bothered about the competition on who should be the lead organization. Our Problem is who should be allowed to bring food to us. The rest of the politics should not bother us at all.

b. *TURKANA'S RESIDENTS VOICE IS SUPPRESSED*

Household respondents indicated that the organizations providing food aid do not take into consideration their demands and needs as expected. They only supply what they have or get from donors.

Nakine, 35 Female household respondent indicated that

The organizations suppress us. We usually tell them the types of foods we are comfortable with but they still give us the white maize as usual.

Naleman, 28, a Female FGD participant indicated that

The organizations see us as illiterate and cannot contribute to ideas regarding our wellbeing. We are treated like no people. Our voices are suppressed and useless.

Peter, 35 Male Key Informant agreed with the households and said that

We are also agents of the organizations. We give food that comes from the donors. We are not able to dictate to the donors on food preference by the people. This has affected our relationships with the beneficiaries

c. *VOTING RIGHTS DEPRIVED*

Food aid has been used as a bait for vote hunting by the national and county government. This has affected the relationship of the beneficiaries and the organizations.

According to Asibitar, 35, Female household respondent

We are used as voting machines and tools. Food is given to us as a campaign tool. It is given to us so that we vote for the leaders who give out food. This has affected our relationships with our leaders. Our rights as voters and choice of leaders are deprived.

Echakan, 32, Female FGD respondent indicated that

We only see food during campaigns. It disappears after the election period. This affects the relationship we have with our leaders because we identify them with relief food and not leadership required in delivering services to us.

James, 40 a key informant indicated that

We give food to beneficiaries. The National government provides food through provincial administration. It is a way of showing Government presence at the villages. It is sometimes used by national Government politicians as a way of endearing to voters to stamp authority and set an indelible mark for future engagements and voting. The medicine to a hungry stomach is food. Politicians use food to lure voters.

d. STEREOTYPES AND LOSS OF IDENTITY

The household respondents indicated that they have lost identity as beneficiaries of the aid. They suffer from stereotype because of the images shared in the national televisions.

Asekon 45 years, Female household respondent noted that:

We listen to news and some see newspapers. We see the images of emaciated Turkana children and animals in the Television news. Our images which are paraded to the media are a big shame especially when we are photographed naked. Showing photos of us and our animals is an abomination because it can expose them to curses. This has been a conflict between us and the organizations. It has affected our relationships with organizations. It also affects household relationships because it is shameful when we see photos of the people we know displayed all over.

Lowoiya, 25 years, Female, an FGD participant agreed with the sentiments and indicated that

The aid as a support to the situation at hand but not appropriate if it involves use of their images. Our images are being splashed all over media in the name of fundraising yet they do not get the cash from their images. It is against the Turkana culture to expose images of animals and human beings that are emaciated. It gives a bad picture of the Turkana and it seems Government and NGOs are happily using it for self-gain. This is affecting our social relationships and causes conflict in the society.

Peter, 50 Years, a key informant from NGO agreed with the households

We receive complains from the households on the issue of images in the media. They tell us that displaying images have a negative impact on the social relationships among the households. It has also caused us our lives because we are not able to take photos during and after food distribution. The community claims that the taking of pictures is affecting how they interact because people are branded based on status of the household that the emaciated members of the household are seen as a source of livelihood when their images are displayed.

The results from the households show that there were different perceptions on the definition of food aid. Constructivism suggests that every individual constructs the social world in his mind through experience while, social constructionism has a social rather than an individual focus (Young and Colin, 2004). Constructivism therefore is the process through which people create reality. People create reality by giving meaning to what they see or observe — meaning that reality is constructed through people's experience through interaction with the world. In this case, food aid has been socially constructed.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that food aid has changed the family dynamics, decontextualized and camouflage with different self-interest hence making people have varied meanings of food therefore affecting societal social relationships of the residents of Turkana County. This has also influenced the

understanding of food security as sustainable access to food. They understand food aid as a savior, promoter of self-interests, a political vehicle, a demeaning activity, an agent of mobility, a source of worry and uncertainty, an agent of conflict, dictatorship, corruption and erosion of culture.

The results indicate further that households of Turkana County understand food aid in different context such as; Food aid as a savior, Food aid as promoter of self-interest, Food aid as a Political vehicle, Food aid as demeaning, Food aid as an agent of mobility, Food aid as a source of worry and uncertainty, Food aid as a source changing concept and perception on food, Food aid as an agent of conflict, Food aid role in erosion of culture, Food aid as agents of corruption, Food aid as a business Enterprise, Food aid as a source of livelihood diversification, Food aid as agents of dictatorship.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for enhanced community participation by humanitarian organizations, strengthened auditing initiatives on humanitarian organizations, diversification of income sources among residents of Turkana County as well as the creation of more sustainable livelihood coping strategies by both governmental and humanitarian organizations on food insecurity coping strategies.

As a policy implication, the findings of this study demonstrate that there is need for legal, legislative and societal reforms on communal understanding of food aid and adoption of existing coping strategies.

The theoretical implication of this study's findings is that social construction theories are useful in the understanding of food insecurity as a social problem.

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