



EXAMINING THE ROLE OF FOOD AID AT COMMUNITY LEVEL: INSIGHTS FROM MASVINGO PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE

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Abstract:

The paper makes an analysis of two food aid initiatives in Zaka district, Masvingo province Zimbabwe. It seeks to unveil food assistance's importance at the community level. Food assistance is a response to a broken and flawed food system in the country. Agriculture, food production and food distribution are affected by unpredictable weather patterns and a declining economy. Utilizing qualitative research methodology, the paper argues that food assistance has variegated impacts at local level depending on the nature of assistance administered. Each type of assistance resulted in different socioeconomic impacts at the community level. Free food assistance plays an important role as a short-term cushion and buffer but the handouts are not enough for long-term upward mobility. Free food assistance beneficiaries managed to explore other livelihood options without worrying about the next meal. Furthermore, the basket received was deemed enough to cover the whole month with the help of other sources of food. On the other hand, productive assets creation is an important intervention and coping strategy during the lean season it creates positive dependence amongst the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries of productive assets creation have a wide range of livelihood options, which translate to positive livelihood outcomes. Productive assets creation is responsible for the increase in human and physical capital. The paper further argues that politics and other structural forces inhibit food assistance from reaching the intended beneficiaries.

Keywords: food assistance; food aid; dependency; livelihoods; Zimbabwe

1. Introduction

Many countries in Sub Saharan Africa face acute food shortages and in the last years, ten countries declared food emergencies every year (Harvey & Riley, 2010). The region

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has not fully recovered from the 2015-2016 El-Nino droughts that pushed 39 million people into severe food insecurity (WFP, 2017). Zimbabwe cannot be excluded from these trends, it has suffered protracted food emergencies for a long period and during the lean seasonⁱⁱ of 2018, 2.4 million people were estimated to be food insecure (ZimVac, 2018). Rainfed agriculture is the backbone of food supplies in the country; this has been under threat, due to the unpredictable weather patterns. Excessive drought, lack of inputs, poor farming practices, and inefficient extension services has negative implications on agriculture in the country (Moyo, M., 2017). The country also faced an economic crisis in 2008; the economic crisis and the world food crisis around the same time intensified the food insecurity situation. In the year 2017, a change in the political atmosphere aggravated the food insecurity situation through further currency distortions and most small-scale farmers lost their savings. In order to counter the food shortages, the country receives food assistance from the donor community, mainly from WFP and Care International.

It is against this background that the paper understands and analyses the complex realities at the community level surrounding food assistance. Most analysis on the impact and role of food assistance takes the macro lense (Barret, 2006). The paper acknowledges that fewer works (Awokuse, 2006; Gentilini, 2016; Clement, 2008) have been done on the role of food aid at the community level and it remains in the margins.

To fill the gap in knowledge, the paper is addressing these questions:

1. What is the impact of timing and targeting in food assistance distribution?
2. How food assistance contributes to local people's livelihood trajectories and the local economy?
3. How do both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries experience food aid?
4. What are the structural factors at play in food assistance distribution matrix?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing Food Aid

Food aid is the external transfer of food from one country to the other, with the aim of assisting the recipient country in meeting its food needs (OECD, 2005). Concurringly the WFP (2017) notes that food assistance is a multifaceted effort to allow vulnerable and food-insecure people and communities to get access to nutritious food.

The definitions by WFP and FAO are all-encompassing definitions that incorporate instruments such as in-kind food, vouchers or cash transfers used to assure recipients' access to food. The main goal of food assistance is to save lives and improve livelihoods in both the short-term and long-term. This paper uses both food aid and food assistance interchangeably because it focuses on humanitarian food assistance as well as cash and food handouts in exchange for work. There is also a shift in

ⁱⁱ Lean season is the season between November (beginning of planting season) and March (green harvest season).

terminology from the use of food aid to food assistance. The argument behind the change in terminology emanates from the idea that the term food aid is restrictive, does not take a broader conceptualization of the intervention, which responds to the food systems (Lowder, 2005).

The development of food aid is not attributed to one single event (Browne cited in Ali& Zeb, 2016). Some of the notable events credited to the development of aid before the Marshal Plan are the 1812 Act, United States provided relief to the people of Venezuela, US supplied other goods to the international market in 1896 and 1929, British approving bilateral aid for improving infrastructure to its colonies (Hjertholm and White cited in Ali and Zeb 2016). China received capital and technical assistance from the League of Nations, between 1929 and 1941 to help in its modernization plans. Under the Marshal plan where United States gave aid to help build war tone Europe and Japan after the 2nd World War. The success that the Marshall plan registered gave aid attention, with anticipation of applying the same model to other developing countries. This led to the emergence of aid and resource transfer from rich countries to poor countries.

Food aid has the same origins as all the other types of aid it originated in the 1950s. Absorbing surplus (US surplus disposal) was the first role of food aid around 1953. It has evolved over time and the Food aid conventions (FAC) have been instrumental vehicles of food aid administration (Parote, n.d). The notable FAC include the 1967 FAC, which was a pioneer in covering food aid provisions to the developing world (Parote, n.d; Cubie, 2011). The 1999 FAC moved a step further and started addressing issues of food security and recognizing the need to end hunger and poverty (United Nations, 1999).

2.2 Food Aid Arguments

The role of food aid has been subject to debate by a lot of scholars (Barret, 2006; Gentilini, 2016; Awokuse, 2006). Despite that sub-Saharan Africa is in the fourth to fifth decade of receiving food aid, multifaceted results on its impact are noted across the continent. In Europe after the World War, aid produced tangible results in rebuilding the war tone countries (Preston, 1996) this is contrary to results in Sub Saharan Africa. Across countries, multicolored impacts are realized where in some instances food aid has been an important tool helping people out of hunger and on other scenarios it has been blamed for causing dependency (Barret, 2006; OECD, 2005; Lensik, 1999). This makes the debate on the role of food aid incomplete and mainly based on two arguments, those who question food aid and those who believe it has good intentions (Barret, 2006; Awokuse, 2006; Clement, 2008). Proponents of food aid argue it is an effective tool for helping food insecure and vulnerable populations out of hunger, improving their livelihood portfolios and boosting the economy of a recipient country (OECD, 2005; Sach, 2005). They further, argue that it is an important intervention and acts as a social safety net of the poor. Conversely, food aid is questioned by a number of scholars (Easterly, 2006; Moyo, 2009) citing reasons, which

range from its motive and impact on the recipient countries (mainly centered around the concept of dependency). The argument is that aid is not the solution to the developing countries' problems; instead, structural reforms that include political, economic, social and entrepreneurial can help in ending poverty (Easterly, 2008).

Politicization of food aid takes center stage in these arguments; donor countries' political motives are viewed through a looking glass (Clapp, 2005). Politicization through the GMO debate, donor countries promoting their subsidies and dumping of excess food in food insecure countries have dominated the food assistance mantra (Barret & Maxwell, 2005; Zerbe, 2004; Keeley & Scoones, 2003). Taking the argument to Zimbabwe, food assistance is highly politicized. The relationship between donor agencies and NGOs distributing aid with the government is disagreeable. The government labels these organizations as machinery used by the western countries to push for regime change agenda (Human Rights Watch, 2004). The conflict in interest between the government and NGOs has in most instances resulted in the latter getting their licenses evoked from operating in the country. In cases where the government has allowed food assistance distribution, the ruling party has used it as a tool to garner for votes (Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2004). The beneficiary selection has also been influenced by party politics where members of the opposition are not allocated food assistance because of their political affiliation (Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2017).

The food aid discussion is also dominated by the notion of dependency, which is one of the hindrances to food assistance achieving its intended objectives (Barret, 2006; OECD, 2005; Lensik, 1999). A dependency exists when one country keeps on relying on another without reciprocity in the relationship (Ferraro, 1996). Negative dependency is the undesired outcome of food aid and it leads to the unintended beneficiaries receiving food aid (Barret, 2005). Recipient government relying on food handouts from donor countries is the undesired outcome of food aid (Nyatoro, 2011). Most studies dispute that food assistance discourages household level of production amongst recipients (Barret, 2006) the recipients usually receive food that is very little to allow them to rely on the assistance. On the contrary, recipient governments are reluctant to pursue agricultural policies intended to enhance food security causing dependency on the state but not the recipient populations. For instance in Ethiopia food assistance tallied with decreasing support in agriculture and rural development initiatives (Clement, 2008).

Globally food assistance is seen as a hidden export incentive to push for agricultural subsidies in developing countries (Barret and Maxwell, 2005). This specifically applies to the United States (US) which is the largest food aid donor. Food assistance has emerged as a controversial topic in trade negotiations where US food aid is often used to disguise export subsidies (Oxfam, 2005). The issue of Genetically Modified food assistance has also caused a lot of debates. Genetically modified maize rejected by Southern African countries during the 2002 food crisis brings to the fore the international politics associated with food assistance (Zerbe, 2004).

Zimbabwe, in particular, rejected the genetically modified maize amidst of growing hunger citing reasons of biosafety. The Zimbabwean government saw this as a way of pushing the nationalistic agenda (Keeley and Scoones, 2003) amidst a land reform that faced international condemnation for having led to a fall in agriculture productivity (Musemwa and Mushunje, 2011). Zimbabwe later agreed to take WFP shipment of genetically modified maize, provided it was milled prior to entry in the country, or immediately on entry to avoid the maize being converted into seeds by local farmers.

Empirical evidence on the significance of food assistance have shown contrasting, contradicting and inconclusive evidence across the continent (Human Policy Report, 2005). In Ethiopia, in the short-run food assistance has rescued people out of hunger. On the other hand scholars (Jan Van Uffelen, 2012) argue that food assistance impacted Ethiopia on agriculture production negatively and at the same time it did not transcend to poverty reduction. In Ethiopia food aid accounted for 2 percent of annual food supplies, similarly, in Kenya it contributed 11 percent of annual food supplies hence as such there was no dependency noted at the household level as food assistance's role was limited (Gentilini, 2016). Positive dependency intertwined with negative dependency was a result of most food assistance initiatives, where food was distributed as food for work (Barret, 2006). Food for work (FFW) limited people's participation in their fields thereby reducing yields in the next harvest (Barret, 2006). Contrasting evidence is noted in Ethiopia where households had excess labor, therefore, allowing other members to work in the fields while other members worked in the FFW initiatives (Barret, 2006).

In Sudan, food assistance was effective in improving rural livelihoods and food security (WFP, 2009; Bailey & Harragin, 2009). Food assistance allowed recipients to pursue other household tasks like clearing fields and building houses and not having to worry about the next meal (ibid). Empirical irregularities are further seen in literature across gender. In Zimbabwe, women preferred food hampers, which they had control over as compared to men who preferred cash (Gentilini, 2016). In China, the food for work program added value to the land assets of poor farmers and stabilized farmers in agriculture and shook households out of poverty and improved farmers livelihoods (Zhu Ling & Jiang Zhongyi, 2004). In India and Bangladesh FFW provided employment opportunities for low skilled workers working on rural infrastructure (Awokuse, 2006).

In some cases, food assistance is coupled with exclusion and fails to reach the intended beneficiaries (OECD, 2006). The role of free food assistance is also limited by corruption, 58% of the assistance does not usually reach the intended beneficiaries (Gentilini, 2016). Most food insecure people are left in the targeting (Awokuse, 2006). This makes assistance a short-term buffer that does not really translate to food security and poverty reduction (Adato and Ahmed, n.d).

2.3 Setting the Scene

The paper focuses on Free Food Assistance (FFA) and Productive Assets Creation (PAC). These interventions are imperative since they bring different outcomes. The

interventions are implemented in Zaka district, located in the South Eastern part of Masvingo city in Zimbabwe. The area is highly food insecure and receives food assistance in various forms from international and local non-governmental organization. The area is affected by low and erratic rainfall that results in mid-season drought and low crop yield (Simba et. al, 2012). It is located in region 4, which is characterized by 450 – 600 mm rainfall per year and is subject to frequent seasonal droughts. Changing weather vagaries are having significant impacts on livelihoods, household consumption, access to water, health and nutrition (Jiri et al, 2015). Livelihood activities follow a seasonal calendar and farming activities are dependent on rain-fed agriculture. The major activities that the community engages in include maize production, livestock production, petty trading and casual supply of labor. Prior to aid during the lean and hunger season households spend their day in the home and they do gardening which they irrigate using water from boreholes and shallow wells. During this season most men migrate temporarily in search of casual jobs to the city, sugarcane plantation in the southeastern low veld and to South Africa. Teachers and nurses who buy cattle, goats, and chickens from the villagers mainly feed the local economy.

3. Material and Methods

The study employed a qualitative form of inquiry and the study was carried out between June 2018 and December 2018 in Zaka district. Purposive sampling was used to select key informant respondents and snowball sampling was used for the food aid beneficiaries. Purposive sampling gave the chance to select respondents working and have adequate knowledge of food aid programs in the area. Snowballing helped to easily locate both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries since villagers know who receives aid or not. Beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and key informants who included Non-governmental organization representatives working in Zaka were interviewed. A total of ten (10) key informants were interviewed using in-depth interviews. Unstructured interviews were conducted with food aid beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries who were asked about the before food aid and after food aid situation. Forty (40) food aid beneficiaries of free food assistance (FFA) and Twenty (20) Productive assets creation (PAC) were interviewed and fifteen (15) non-beneficiaries were interviewed. The difference in the numbers of the respondents is because PAC targets few people as compared to FFA. A series of field trips during the ration days were conducted giving easy access to the beneficiaries and it also gave the researchers a chance to observe the process of food distribution. Additionally, informal focus group discussions were conducted during the ration days. Gender of respondents was also taken into consideration an equal number of men and women were interviewed. Considering gender was important because men and women have different roles and responsibilities and their choices and expectations in relation to the forms and types food aid handouts are different. This is discussed in the subsequent sections. The data gathered was

triangulated and corroborated with evidence from observations during the community visits.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Targeting and Timing

In terms of targeting FFA, targets vulnerable labor constrained households hence the name vulnerable group feeding. Vulnerable groups are targeted using food security proxy indicators. Some of the food security proxy indicators include food consumption, assets and household dietary requirements. A lower score under these indicators shows food vulnerability thereby receiving food assistance. On the other hand, PAC started in 2012 targeting vulnerable communities and empowering them through the creation of assets and increasing their resilience to future food security shocks (WFP, 2012). World Food Program refers to PAC as a 'new strategy', which is a departure from FFA. As an incentive for working in different community initiatives, they are given cash or food. Compared to FFA, PAC targets a few people.

Poor targeting of FFA is a major setback in achieving its objectives; food did not reach the intended beneficiaries because of corruption embedded in the targeting and distribution process. This supports earlier studies by Gentilini (2016) arguing that 58% of food does not reach the intended beneficiaries. The study noted that community leaders distributed food to community elites who are not on the vulnerable list because of their position in society. In return, they received favors from the community elites justifying the widely used idiom 'scratch my back and I scratch yours'. The study established that influential people like local business owners; teachers and nurses were given the free food basket, which was not meant for them. This misplaced targeting results in the exclusion of food aid beneficiaries (OECD, 2006). These recipients did not match the set criteria and they used the food received for unintended purposes such as feeding their chickens and giving food insecure people in exchange for them doing casual jobs. This misplaced targeting was not seen in PAC mainly because it involves working before they receive food and cash as an incentive.

With reference to timing both programs were administered at very crucial times during the lean season between November and March (next harvest). This season coincides with the planting and rain season. It is the argument of this paper that FFA does not compromise household labor supply when it comes to working in the fields. Free Food Assistance gives beneficiaries the opportunity to explore other livelihood strategies as well as working in the fields during the farming season. Contrarily, under PAC, timing produced flecked impacts depending with the size of the household. It can be noted that households with more members managed to divide roles amongst themselves thereby not compromising household labor supply. In Ethiopia food for work, did not present a labor deficit to the households (Gentilini, 2016). Most households had excess labor hence dividing responsibilities amongst themselves thereby providing an opportunity to work for food whilst producing in the fields.

Barret (2006) highlighted the importance of timing in food assistance administration arguing that food aid programs especially food for work interfere with the farming season and compromise household labor. In this context for households without excess labor supply, PAC results in a labor deficit.

The FFA basket allocated to one person included 10 kilograms (kg) cereal, 0.75kg vegetable oil, 2kg cowpeas and 5kg bulgur wheat per month this basket have a market value of USD\$16. The number of people in the household till five persons multiply the basket and after that the basket becomes stagnant. This implies that a household with more than five members receives lower food aid per capita. The free food baskets' composition was subject to criticism by most respondents. They argued that: *"The food they received was not part of their daily diet and staple food this made it difficult to integrate the food in their daily meals"*.

Bulgur wheat given to the beneficiaries was new and alien to them, respondents alluded that they do not usually eat the bulgur because they are not used to it thereby feeding chickens or just keeping it in the house. As for PAC instead of just making free food available like in FFA the recipients of PAC engage in community initiatives which include repairing roads, reducing disaster risks and supporting climate change adaptation. The program has three main objectives nutrition, increased income and community resilience. What is worth noting is that household members can be involved in all the food assistance interventions. This means that a household can receive FFA as well as having a member involved in PAC. This has pertinent implication on livelihood outcomes, discussed in the following section. Furthermore, there was a trend where women and men echoed different preferences in terms of what they wanted to receive as an incentive for working. Women preferred food, which they had control over as compared to the men who preferred cash. This is embedded in the patriarchal nature of society where the men are the head of the family and they men control all the money in the household and women budget food (Kambarami, 2006).

4.2 Food Aid and Livelihood Trajectories

Food assistance had variegated impacts depending on the nature of assistance. This paper argues that food assistance administered as FFA is an important short-term buffer to the recipients, although it does not translate to improved livelihood trajectories. On the other hand, PAC is beneficial and produces tangible impacts on poor people's livelihood options. Upward mobility is seen among the beneficiaries of PAC as a result of food assistance. Comparing the ex-ante and ex-post stories of the beneficiaries shows a remarkable improvement on PAC beneficiaries' welfare. The paper compares the role of the two programs in terms of livelihood assets, livelihood strategies and the broader livelihood portfolio.

Free food assistance acted as a buffer and helps protect households during the hunger season and reduced selling of assets mainly livestock. On the contrary, it did not have positive impacts on increasing income and livelihood portfolios. The basket received was deemed enough to cover the whole month with the addition of other food

commodities from 'piece works' and other food assistance initiatives. Contrasting evidence from the household of more than five members shows that the basket did not last the whole month (30 days) and was not helpful to their welfare. The capita food received becomes stagnant on households of five plus this results in them receiving a smaller ration. Studies from Ethiopia had shown that the quantity of food aid received by households is usually too small to encourage reliance on it (Barret, 2006; Little, 2008). This study noted that the measure received depends on the number of people in a household and families with individuals below five are well sustained with the basket received as it lasts a month. However, food per head gets lower for bigger families and discourages reliance on food assistance.

Unlike FFA, which is a top-down intervention PAC is a community-driven development program, which encourages villagers and households to manage their own development. The beneficiaries of the program mentioned that PAC had improved their livelihood portfolios at the same initiating development in the community. Evidence has shown beneficiaries' welfare improving ever since the program was incepted. A significant number of the beneficiaries shared sentiments on how PAC had helped in the rebuilding of assets. There is growth in physical and human capital in the area. Physical assets to them varied from wheelbarrows, ploughs, scotch carts, bicycle, mobile phone, solar panels, building a house, clothes, and furniture. Most (85%) of the beneficiaries agreed to have acquired more than one of the above-mentioned assets. Assets also included some household tools such as ploughs and carts, which improved farming and food production. Human capital growth is noticed through the knowledge in assets management, which most interviewed people acknowledged to have helped them save and acquire more assets. Productive Assets Creation teaches people how to manage assets through training on asset management.

In addition recipients pointed out that the worsening economic situation since 2017 in the country was being unfavorable to them. They were of the view that when PAC started (2012) the country was using the United States Dollar as a medium of exchange and the economy was recovering from hyperinflation. Most beneficiaries shared sentiments that they could plan and set aside money for buying assets. A 'surrogate' currency called the 'bond note' was introduced in 2016 and resulted in currency distortions. Beneficiaries argued that it altered their planning and savings. This paper, therefore, argues that even though PAC is beneficial the country's economic situation is relevant in establishing planning and savings trends for the beneficiaries. The money they get from selling agriculture produce needs months of saving to buy tangible assets. This is becoming less practical to the beneficiaries within a collapsing economy.

Both FFA and PAC impacted on livelihood strategies positively. Free food handouts gave recipients a chance to have more time for diversified livelihood strategies. A significant number (75%) of beneficiaries asserted that receiving the food basket had helped them diversify their livelihood strategies through finding part-time jobs, petty trading, working in gardens and fields, as they did not have to worry about

food. This goes against the general myth that food assistance results in negative dependency where the poor are unwilling to work (Barret, 2006; Lentz.et. al, 2005). In Sudan, emergency food assistance after the war allowed recipients to pursue other household tasks; like clearing fields and building houses and not having to worry about the next meal (Bailey & Harragin, 2009).

Diversification and extensification of activities resulted in a positive impact on livelihood strategies under PAC. Almost all (90%) of recipients pointed out they were diversifying their livelihoods through buying livestock, growing other crops like sugar beans and entering into contract farming with companies and a ready market was established for their vegetables. The rehabilitation of a dam and small irrigation system under the PAC initiative resulted in the local community having more access to water since the rains were becoming less predictable. According to the interviewed they alluded an increase in the number of hectares from an approximate of 2 hectares to 5 hectares showing agriculture extensification.

4.3 Political and local economy impacts of food aid

Food safety is an issue raised by the respondents; the cooking oil they received was solid unlike the liquid cooking oil recipients are accustomed to. Beneficiaries were skeptical about the oil citing that they did not know if it was good or harmful. Despite their pessimism, they used the oil because of the need for it. These findings contribute to one of the ongoing debates on food assistance; the recipient governments have raised issues of biosafety of food assistance. The paper argues that recipients are victims of health uncertainties in the long run and cannot change their fate, choosing between being hungry and using unsafe oil they opt for the latter.

In addition the agricultural extension officers interviewed supported the plight of the food aid beneficiaries on food safety of the basket received. They further lamented that the maize beneficiaries received was not milled before entering the country and some beneficiaries used the maize as seeds. This had resulted in a worm called 'fawearm' worm affecting the crops, which they suspected originated from the maize handouts and with South American origin. Receiving maize that is not milled is against the idea that the government had once advocated for maize to be milled before entering the country as mentioned before in this article.

It is the argument of the paper that for food assistance to provide positive effects on the livelihood of the poor, neglecting politics is detrimental to the development fraternity. The paper infuses the influence of politics in the targeting of beneficiaries and concurs with (Scoones, 2009) that politics is neglected in the livelihood analysis but remains a very important structural factor that impacts donor interventions. In this case, at the community level, food assistance has become a political tool used by politicians to campaign. This research was conducted at the time of 2018 general election and empirical evidence show that food assistance is used for political gain where politicians use it to garner for support. Furthermore, members of the opposition suffer discrimination because of their political inclination.

These findings are corroborated by Chinsinga (2012) alludes that in Malawi the politicians used subsidies to gain political support. A paradox is that politicians at the national level do not want to receive food aid citing that GM food is a health hazard but latter use the food to advance their political interest. The paper focuses on community-level politics, more can be investigated for future studies on the connection between local politics and national politics in terms of food aid administration and model.

Productive Assets Creation outcomes showed a multiplier effect on community development. The paper ascertains that PAC is an important food assistance intervention for both beneficiaries and the community. Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries shared their sentiments on how PAC had improved their community through the rehabilitation of roads. During the rainy season, the gravel roads become inaccessible and PAC had improved the roads this made it easier for people to travel to the hospital since the local clinics did not have adequate health services. In addition rehabilitation of wells and irrigation schemes had a positive effect on water sources for the community.

Prices of food (especially maize prices) during free food aid distribution season 10 kilograms of maize which usually costs USD\$10 went down to USD\$7 or USD\$5 depending on the amount of assistance received. This is in light with non-beneficiaries they believed it was a positive outcome, where they could also access food at lower prices. Other food supplies, which are not part of the community's daily diet, remained unchanged. Local business people did not share similar sentiments with non-beneficiaries; they argued that free food assistance was not good for business. One local businessperson interviewed narrated that giving people free food was not good for his business; it reduced maize prices. He further substantiated that he liked a program (PAC) where beneficiaries were given money since they would go to his shop and promote business. Jere (2007) made similar observations in a study Malawi, there was evidence of market distortions with the increased availability of maize and it reduced demand for commercial maize.

5. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion showed the socio-economic impacts of food assistance at the community level. Timing, targeting are important aspects of food aid distribution, if not distributed properly food aid ended in the hands of those who do not need it. The major arguments presented is that PAC has more desirable impacts at the household and community level whereas, on the other hand, FFA has a lot of problems borne to the intervention. The paper also established that food assistance does not create negative dependency on the beneficiaries; instead, it gives them an opportunity to pursue other household and livelihood tasks. The Free Food Assistance basket received is not enough to leave household dependent on it. The government, however, becomes reluctant in pursuing agricultural policies to improve food production due to food aid. In the case of PAC, there is the creation of positive dependency as beneficiaries acquire

physical assets and human capital through asset management courses. The paper concludes that PAC has a multiplier effect; this is seen through community development and improving beneficiaries' livelihoods.

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