

Abstract

The Zimbabwe food security situation has considerably worsened in view of the socio-economic and political climate at play in the country. It is argued in this research that food aid in the form of handouts, when administered to vulnerable groups, may temporarily insulate them from food insecurity problems. The study focused on the role and impact of food aid on the impoverished households of Gwanda District, in Matabeleland South Province in the southern part of Zimbabwe. An evaluation was needed to find out whether food aid has played a positive role on the livelihoods of the inhabitants of Gwanda District or otherwise. The study also wanted to ascertain whether government's approach to ensuring food security had produced the intended results.

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study and data was gathered through household interviews with food aid beneficiaries in two wards of Gwanda District. Interviews were also conducted with the World Vision district management team as well as the community leadership.

The study revealed that food aid, when timeously distributed, can improve the dietary status, nutrition, and consumption of many households in Gwanda District. It has saved the loss of many lives as well as led to long term development. On the other hand food aid has had a negative impact on food security is so far as it has changed people's attitude towards self-reliance, and self-sustainability. It has creating a dependency syndrome and ushered a culture of negligence on the assumption that free food, will be administered even if one does not work in the fields , since the source of food it offers is easier to come by than by providing food oneself.