Sustainable Management of Family and Societal Resources: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives

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Abstract

The family unit is the foundation of any society, and therefore it is both the custodian and the beneficiary of society's resources. The three pillars of sustainable family development are social equity, economic viability, and environmental conservation. Bearing on this, the paper reviewed the challenges faced by families in African society such as poverty, political instability, unemployment, insecurity, gender inequality, domestic violence, cultural norms, substance abuse, parent-child conflict, and climate change. It further explored the roles of the family in the sustainable development of society as well as the challenges encountered in the sustainable management of scarce family resources. The paper also provides the way forward and policy recommendations.

Keywords: Sustainable Management, Family Resources, Societal Resources, Challenges, Family Mutuality.

Introduction
I am pleased to be here with you today as the keynote speaker. I have been invited to speak about *Sustainable Management of Family and Societal Resources: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives.* As a society, we face varied challenges, such as poverty, political instability, unemployment, insecurity, gender inequality, domestic violence, cultural norms, substance abuse, parent-child conflict, climate change, and so forth. These issues impact the sustainability of family and societal resources management. The challenges have led to the decadence of societal resources. The recent Nigerian Presidential election brought a bitter reality in a modern democracy. It taught us that thuggery, snatching of ballot boxes, violence, destruction of lives and properties, or antisocial behaviours are rewarded. This practice is unacceptable.

Role of Family in Sustainable Development of Societies
The family unit is the foundation of any society; it follows the sustainability mindset model (Tavanti & Davis, 2018). The family unit instils disciplines, values, and responsibilities, such as teaching respect, having a secure and loving environment, loving homes, strong inspiration for education, and rewards for hard work, honesty, and integrity. In addition, the families form an environment of open communication, which in turn builds trust and teamwork. This model is transitioned to the next generation of leadership within the family tree and society.

Martine and Alves (2015) asserted that the three pillars of sustainable family development are social equity, economic viability, and environmental conservation. According to John Davis (2014), family sustainability consists of the growth of family assets, family unity, and family talent.

Sustainability Challenges Faced by Family
1. Poverty/unemployment is a significant challenge in Nigeria, with many families struggling to meet their basic needs, leading to stress, conflict, and breakdown in family relationships (Muazu & Abdullahi, 2019).
2. According to Anyangwe (2015), gender inequality is still a major challenge in Nigerian families, with women often having limited access to education and economic opportunities. This issue leads to gender-based violence, unequal distribution of household responsibilities, and other forms of discrimination.
3. According to Eke and Ogba (2021), natural disasters, such as soil erosion menace, have caused many communities to face severe life-threatening and exposure to devasting security challenges, which have resulted in armed robbery attacks, kidnapping, raping, Fulani cattle herders attacks, which have left the victimized communities with little or no ecological interventions from the government.
4. Akinola (2014) established that domestic violence is a significant problem in Nigeria, with many women and children experiencing physical, sexual, and emotional abuse within the family unit. It results in trauma, mental health problems, and long-term negative effects on family relationships.

5. Cultural Norms around gender roles, marriage, and family relationships also challenge Nigerian families. For example, the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles can pressure individuals to conform to societal norms.
6. Substance Abuse, predominantly alcohol and drug abuse, create challenges within Nigerian families and could lead to emotional instability, financial strain, and adverse effects on family relationships.
7. Adejumo (2018) alerted that parent-child conflict arises when there is a clash between traditional and modern values or parents have different expectations for their children, which could cause tension, communication breakdown, and strained family connections.

Family Mutuality- Sustainable Solutions of Family and Societal Resources
The challenges facing families are complex and multifaceted, with various social, economic, cultural, and psychological factors influencing family dynamics and relationships. Overcoming these hurdles requires a concerted effort from individuals, families, communities, and government institutions to promote equality, protect vulnerable individuals, and support healthy family relationships to enable sustainable societal resources.

Because the idea of family has evolved and varies depending on cultural, social, and historical factors, it is characterized by greater flexibility in family structure, gender roles, and parenting practices compared to traditional family models. One aspect of the family is the increasing diversity of family structures.

Family emphasizes positive communication, empathy, and negotiation, which are essential for the growth of their financial assets. These three factors- growth of family assets, family unity, and family talent- are crucial for consistent family success and vital for leading families worldwide. The family units should be recognized as having an essential role in the ecosystems. Because it plays critical roles in society, serving a variety of functions that contribute to the overall well-being of individuals and communities.

The family is responsible for the socialization of children, helping them learn the values, norms, and behaviours of their culture. Children learn to communicate, cooperate, and relate to others through family interactions and modelling. In addition, families provide economic support to their members, income-earning, or pooling resources. The family provides emotional support and a sense of belonging to its members, creating a secure and supportive environment for their development. The family cares for its members, including children, elderly relatives, and those with disabilities or illnesses. Finally, families are responsible for transmitting cultural traditions, beliefs, and values to future generations, ensuring the continuity of culture and identity.

While there are still challenges and inequalities facing families, the family represents a move towards greater diversity, flexibility, and equality within family relationships.

Ifegbesan (2010) stated the theoretical frameworks, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), an individual intention to perform is the immediate determinant of the action, and Planned

Behavior (TPB) stipulates that what a person does is determined by personal motivation, which is determined by social support, attitude, and perceived behavioural control. Therefore, families play essential roles in developing and managing societal resources through numerous strategies, including the following:

1. *Responsible consumption*: Families can practice responsible consumption by conserving energy, reducing waste, and choosing eco-friendly products, which will help to reduce the family's environmental effects and preserve natural resources for future generations. Recycling: is another vital way to manage societal resources sustainably. Families can recycle plastic, paper, glass, and metal to reduce waste and conserve natural resources around their terrains.

2. *Education and awareness*: Educate families about the importance of managing resources and the impact of their actions on the environment, which will promote a culture of sustainability and encourage responsible behaviour.

3. *Community Engagement*: Families can participate in community initiatives and programs promoting sustainable practices, such as gardens, helping build community, and promoting a shared responsibility for managing resources.

4. *Advocacy*: Families can advocate for policies and programs that promote sustainable practices at the local, state, national, and global levels. This approach can include supporting policies that protect the environment, reduce waste, and promote renewable energy.

5. *Collaboration*: Families can collaborate among themselves, organizations, and businesses to promote sustainability and share resources, including sharing tools and participating in community events that promote sustainable practices.

6. *Government Involvement*: need to build institutions with strong governance and can provide adequate funding and policy implementation to raise the level of public awareness toward environmental quality, knowledge, and attitude toward nature conservation.

7. *Adopting technology*: can play an essential role in promoting sustainable management of family and societal resources by leveraging smart technology, such as thermostats, lighting, telecommuting, shared public transportation, and waste management apps to reduce environmental impacts. In addition, the rise of emerging algorithm-driven artificial intelligence (AI), ChatGPT, and similar AI solutions envisaged amplifying human effectiveness and efficiency.

In summary, the success of sustainable management of family and societal resources depends on the sustainability and development of the intergenerational management process and the drive to make the right decisions and professionalization in the institutionalization process of the management approach.

I leave you with these quotes:
 "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new

model that makes the existing model obsolete”

> *- Buckminster Fuller.*

"It is horrifying that we have to fight our government to save the environment."

> *- Ansel Adams.*

Nevertheless, I say:

> "It is horrifying that we have to fight our government to save our votes; however, the only way to contribute to sustainable management of family and societal resources is to cast our votes and stand to defend the transmission of our votes, lest we perish in corruption."

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