**Food Access as an Environmental Health and an Environmental Justice**

Food deserts refer to geographic areas with residents whose access to healthy and affordable food selections such as fresh vegetables and fruits is non-existent and restricted owing to the deficiency of grocery supplies within the reliable itinerant distances (Wright, Donley, Gualtieri, & Strickhouser, 2016). To illustrate this, the report that was organized by the Economic Research Service Congress from the Agriculture Department in the United States showed that 2.2 per cent of its households live one or more miles away from the hypermarket and do not have vehicles to help them reach the supermarket in time. Social-economically, food deserts can also be defined as colored communities and areas of low-income or rather individuals who do not own cars (Crush & Battersby, 2016, p. 58). According to the studies done, wealthy districts have more supermarkets, three times than the poor areas.This paper seeks to discuss food deserts in depth discussing why they exist as well as their implications, and provide suggestions as to how they can be alleviated.

The presence of food deserts is due to the typical location of people from areas of low-income whereby residents do not have vehicles. In this case, public transportation rarely helps these people. The fiscal flux often drives the grocery supplies to the suburbs which are out of the city. This makes them be far away from the individual, meaning that they ought to spend most of the daytime moving to and from the grocers and besides that carrying the groceries home from the bus or the subway stop. Apart from that, the fact that they are socio-economic means that they occur in colored communities with low income and purchasing power combined with the absence of transportation that results in purchase of processed foods and fast foods at the bend store (Wolf-Powers, 2017, p. 115). As a result, the increase in heart disease, diabetes, and higher incidences of obesity are recorded.

**Environmental Justice**

Despite peoples' operating budget, good and healthy food is costly. Adam Drewnowski, Director of the center of public health Nutrition calculated and estimated a 2000-calorie diet costs $36.32 a day while it consisted of junk food compared to $36.02 diet consisting low-energy-dense foods (Crush & Battersby, 2016). In conclusion, he said that it is easier for one to over-eat unhealthy energy saturated food for it often tastes better and is more satisfying in volume for its cost. The federal government therefore needs to step in at this point. Away from the federal government and poverty which are the main causes of environmental justice, gender is another factor that needs to be considered. The single mothers who stay within the city find it difficult to walk long distances in search of fresh food. Some of them solely depend on fast foods that are processed in the nearly available industries. This is also influenced by the type of job that a person does for income, there are some who find themselves with more than one form of job to raise income, this results in environmental justice as most of them will not have time to travel or walk long distances to access of fresh food.

**Health Implications of Food Desert**

Limited access of the population to affordable and nutritious foods, such as low-fat dairy, whole grain, or other healthy foods leads to suffering from high rates of diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease since it impacts on the individual behaviors and health outcomes. One of the most serious challenges is obesity as in this case, people often take diets that are high in calories but have low nutritional value. This affects mainly the preschool children. Cardiovascular disease on the other hand is higher in people within low-income living neighborhoods despite their access to healthier foods (Shaw, 2017, p.30). Diabetes is another health implication of food desert which is related to poverty and unemployment, but the relationship between these food deserts and health outcomes are still intact. Those who need to travel some distances to access fresh food in most cases do not take balance diet, and in many cases, their diet is deficient of vitamins found in fruits. Therefore, most of them suffer from health problem associated with lack of vitamins such as vision problem, scurvy, and all other diet related illness.

**Possible Solutions**

To eliminate food deserts, then a lot has to be done although the answer may take time, money, and human capital to be implemented. One of the suggestions would entail people growing fruits and vegetables in home gardens no matter how small they may be. This would reduce the distance involved in getting groceries as well as the need for purchasing them. This move will bring about other environmental benefits such as heat reduction, wastewater management, energy conservation, and improved air quality. Provision of nutritional education emphasized on smart purchasing decisions and healthy cooking classes can also help to eliminate food desert. This will entail training volunteers how to teach their neighbors on how to select, store, preserve the fresh produce with the view of living healthier and supporting sustainable food systems. On the other hand, supermarkets can introduce a card that will entitle children to a free item of fresh produce when they are shopping with an adult (Wolf-Powers, 2017, p. 115). This will help the local corner store to solve the underlying issues that challenge the retailers to keep fresh produce in stock as well as allow people to access healthier food choices in familiar places.

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