

Household Food Security and Poverty Reduction in Cameroon

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Abstract : The reduction of poverty and hunger sits at the heart of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and are the first two of the Sustainable Development Goals. The World Food Day celebrated on the 16th of October every year, highlights the need for people to have physical and economic access at all times to enough nutritious and safe food to live a healthy and active life; while the world poverty day celebrated on the 17th of October is an opportunity to acknowledge the struggle of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard, and for the community to recognize and support poor people in their fight against poverty. The association between household food security and poverty reduction is not only sparse in Cameroon but mostly qualitative. The paper therefore investigates the effect of household food security on poverty reduction in Cameroon quantitatively using data from the Cameroon Household Consumption Survey collected by the Government Statistics Office. The methodology employed five indicators of household food security using the Multiple Correspondence Analysis and poverty is captured as a dummy variable. Using a control function technique, with pre and post estimation test for robustness, the study postulates that household food security has a positive and significant effect on poverty reduction in Cameroon. A unit increase in the food security score reduces the probability of the household being poor by 31.8%, and this effect is statistically significant at 1%. The result further illustrates that the age of the household head and household size increases household poverty while households residing in urban areas are significantly less poor. The paper therefore recommends that households should diversify their food intake to enhance an effective supply of labour in the job market as a strategy to reduce household poverty. Furthermore, family planning methods should be encouraged as a strategy to reduce birth rate for an equitable distribution of household resources including food while the government of Cameroon should also develop the rural areas given that trend in urbanization are associated with the concentration of productive economic activities, leading to increase household income, increased household food security and poverty reduction.

Keywords : food security, poverty reduction, SDGs, Cameroon

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