

Household Food Insecurity and Associated Coping Strategies in Urban, Peri-Urban and Rural Settings: A Case of Morogoro and Iringa Towns, Tanzania

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Abstract : Food insecurity is a worrying challenge worldwide with sub-Saharan Africa including Tanzania being the most affected. Although factors that influence household food access security status and ways of coping with such factors have been examined, little has been reported on how these coping strategies vary along the urban-rural continuum especially in medium-sized towns. The purpose of this study was to identify food insecurity coping strategies employed by households and assess whether they are similar along the urban-rural continuum. The study was cross-sectional in design whereby a random sample of 279 households was interviewed using structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 software. It was revealed that the proportion of households relying on less preferred and quality foods, eating fewer meals per day, undertaking work for food or money, performing farm and off-farm activities, and selling fall back assets was higher in rural settings compared to urban and peri-urban areas. Similarly, more households in urban and peri-urban areas cope with food access insecurity by having strict food budgets compared to those in rural households ($p \leq 0.001$). The study concludes that food insecurity coping strategies vary significantly from one spatial entity to another. It is thereby recommended that poor, particularly rural households should be supported to diversify their income-generating activities not only for food security purposes during times of food shortage but also as businesses aimed at increasing their household incomes.

Keywords : food coping strategies, household food insecurity, medium-sized towns, urban-rural continuum

Conference Title : ICSR 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020