

Assessment of Households' Food Security and Hunger Level across Communities in Ile-Ife, Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract : This study assessed households' food security and hunger levels among different communities with varying educational and economic background in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, and its environment. It also examined the impacts of varying demography on the household food security level in the area. This was with a view to providing information on the food security status of the subjects within the study area. Ten different communities with varying demography (Parakin, Mokuro, Ilare, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Staff Quarters, Ibadan Road, Aba-Iya Gani, Eleweran, Iraye, Boosa, and Eku-Isobo) were identified within the study area. Fieldwork was then carried out from 7th to 14th of March, 2016 in each of these communities through survey of market prices of food stuff, diet, and nutrition, social well-being, food accessibility and affordability as well as price fluctuation and variation in household's social background. Selection of households for the survey was done using stratified random sampling method. Key informants included community heads, landlords, tenants, and household heads. Similarly, information on food security levels with respect to demographic backgrounds was obtained from the use of modified Food and Hunger Insecurity Module (FHIM) structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to one percent of the households' population per community. The results showed that communities such as Parakin and OAU Senior Staff Quarters were dominated by civil servants, while community such as Boosa was dominated by artisans. Respondents earning between ₦11,000 and ₦20,000 per month, during the study period, had the highest percentage across the selected communities. The household food security indices showed that about 41% of the investigated respondents could not guarantee their household food for a month, while 18% reduced or skipped meals. There were positive significant relationships between monthly income (F-value = 132.04), educational status (F-value = 102.30), occupation (F-value = 104.05) and food budget (F-value = 122.09), all at $p < 0.05$. However, there was no significant relationship between the monthly food budget and household sizes (t-value = -1.4074, $p > 0.05$). Food secured households' had the household heads with a higher level of educational attainment. The study concluded that large variations which existed between socio-economic and educational background among the communities had significant effects on households' food security level in the study area.

Keywords : food security, households, hunger level, market prices

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