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Household Assets and Food Access Security in and Around Medium-Sized Towns in Tanzania

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Abstract

It is widely established that household food insecurity is caused by lack of necessary assets to acquire food. The contribution of these assets varies from one household to another and from location to location depending on the options available, and the household's wealth status. The questions which arise are thus: (1) to what extent household asset ownership varies in places regarded as urban, peri-urban and rural? (2) Which of the household assets influence food access security in such areas? A cross-sectional research design was employed whereby a stratified random sample of 279 households was drawn along the urban-rural continuum in Morogoro and Iringa, Tanzania. Household food access security was assessed using the household food insecurity access scale (HFIAS) whereas chi-square test was used to test relationship between resource ownership and the location of the household along the continuum. Binary logistic regression was performed to determine the influence of household asset ownership on its food access security. It was found that asset ownership varied significantly among urban, peri-urban and rural households. Additionally, it was revealed that household food access security improved as household head's education ($\beta = 0.213$; $p \leq 0.01$) and number of household members earning income ($\beta = 1.115$; $p \leq 0.05$) increased. On the other hand, food access security worsened as household size ($\beta = -0.408$; $p \leq 0.05$), the proportion of consumption expenditure on food ($\beta = -0.151$; $p \leq 0.001$), and reliance on donations ($\beta = -3.770$; $p \leq 0.01$) increased. It is concluded that households asset ownership vary greatly among urban, peri-urban and rural households. Also, the influence of household's assets on its food access security varies along the urban-rural continuum. Therefore, households along the urban-rural continuum should strive to own mostly assets that enable them to produce or purchase enough food.

Keywords: Asset ownership, food access security, household, peri-urban and rural areas, urban