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Household Food Security under the Conditions of Poverty: Evidence from Kordofan Region, Central-West Sudan

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Abstract

Despite the proper efforts that have been made by government and NGOs to support the food security in Sudan, there are still significant numbers of food insecure people in the country. Several factors are responsible for this, including: limited access to food, due to low productivity of agricultural crops and drastically increase of food prices which effects on the food security status of farm households, who access the majority of their food from the market. This situation forced the farm households to adopt different coping mechanisms in order to secure their food consumption. This paper will give detailed findings on the potential impact of socio-economic and environmental factors that hinder the household food security under the conditions of poverty. It will also argue that if the income from agricultural growth is spent locally and rural off-farm activities are promoted, this can have a considerable impact on the incomes of the poor. The data were collected in Kordofan region, Central-West Sudan during the season 2009/2010. A structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed to 200 farm households using multi-stage random technique. In addition, group discussions were conducted with key informants to ensure the accuracy of the data in the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and econometric estimates were used to analyse the primary data obtained from the survey. The results of the descriptive statistics show that 75% of sampled households did not have sufficient food to secure their needs, especially during the off-season, whereas 73% of households reported inadequate income to buy food. In addition, the results of OLS regression show that the costs of production inputs, seed, area cultivated, type of land, rainfall distribution, net farm income, off-farm income, and animal ownership are the significant variables determining the food security status in the area. Given the close link between local production and food insecurity, investments in the agricultural sector that increase food availability and strengthen the resilience of the food production system will have immediate positive impact on all elements of food security in food insecure areas.

Keywords: Environmental factors, food prices, food security, off-farm income, poverty, productivity