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Impacts of social capital and rural households’ livelihood strategies on food/nutrition security and income

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Abstract

Food demand worldwide is always rising, hence increasing smallholder farmers’ productivity and production through appropriate livelihood methods in order to address the issue is essential. As the most important resources for livelihoods, social capital has effects on rural household’s livelihood strategies. The food system of rural households, which are typically impacted by climatic and non-climatic shocks, is influenced by both the state of social capital and household livelihood strategies. Food security is impacted by social capital by enhancing the pillars of food security (food availability, food accessibility, food consumption, and food system stability). The household’s participation in local organisations leads to the exchange of food goods and information, which makes food more readily available and accessible. The degree of social capital, like Ethiopia, has a significant impact on rural households’ access to food and nutrition as well as income level. Data was collected from 400 randomly selected households in 2023 from North Showa, Ethiopia. The results of a multinomial endogenous switching model show that participation in farming and non-farming livelihood strategies increases farm households’ food and nutrition security status by 25 %, while participation in farming and off-farming livelihood diversification strategies and farming with both non-farming and off-farming livelihood diversification strategies increases households’ food and nutrition security by 43 and 37 %, respectively, over non-diversified households. The sample households’ high and very high levels of local organisation engagement improve the food security status of farm households by 33 and 38 % in comparison to low level participant households, respectively (statistically significant at the 1 % probability level). The impact evaluation of mean comparison results demonstrates that very high level participation in the local social organisation boosts farm households’ livelihood diversification techniques by 40 % compared to low participant households. Similarly, having high levels of social trust in the community increases farm households’ livelihood diversification strategies by 59 % over low-trust households. Thus, the findings of this study are predicted to offer a substantial contribution as policy and strategic inputs in establishing rural livelihood improvement programmes, besides stallholder farmers’ improvement of their food/nutrition security, income and quality of life and food systems improvement in rural areas.

Keywords: Endogenous switching model, Ethiopia, food/nutrition security, livelihood strategies, social capital