

Research Paper

Analysis of Factors Affecting Sustainable Food Security Rural Households (Case Study: Zanjan Township)

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ABSTRACT

Providing sustainable food security in rural societies is one of the main objective of rural development programs. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the factors affecting the sustainable food security of rural households. The study design is descriptive-analytical with practical applications. The study population was rural households in Zanjan Township. In 2011, Zanjan Township comprised 97225 rural people, 26429 households, 13 districts and 248 villages. A total of 54 villages were selected as study villages. Library and field research (questionnaire) were used for data collection. For data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (1-sample t test and linear regression) were used. Results indicated that sustainable food security of rural households was not optimum. The economic factors were the most important factors in food security of sustainable rural households. According to the research findings, suggestions, such as expanding and strengthening consumer stores, offering a basket of food commodities were provided to families covered by social institutions.

Keywords:

Food security, Rural poverty, Sustainable development, Zanjan Township

Extended Abstract**1. Introduction**

In this case study, problems such as the expansion of the traditional methods and incorrect exploitation of resources, low awareness level of rural households, the quantity and quality of water resources, increase social inequalities between rural people, environmental pollution, increased use of pesticides in soil and water, reduce soil fertility were the barriers to achieve sustainable food security. However, achieving sustainable food security needs maintaining and promotion of environmental, social and economic contexts. These difficulties necessitate studies about sus-

tainable food security. According to the mentioned problems and necessity of studying sustainable food security in rural areas, the following questions arise:

1. What is sustainable food security level in studied rural households?
2. What factors affect sustainable food security of rural households?
3. What studied factors are more effective and on what dimensions?

2. Methodology

This study is an applied descriptive-analytic research. The study population comprised Zanjan Township. In

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2011, the study area consisted of 97225 villagers, 26429 households, 13 districts and 248 villages. To select the studied villages out of total villages in the township, they were classified into five groups based on the population and using the simple random sampling, 54 villages were randomly selected. These villages have a population of 11662 households. Results obtained from linear regression analysis and based on the beta coefficients, the significance level of quality of housing, water land, income, subsidized, the number of small animal, large livestock numbers, the non-agricultural income, number of people employed in family and history received facilities, were economic factors affecting the sustainable food security of rural households.

The number of samples required to complete the questionnaire was determined using a sample of 290 households. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (one-sample t test and linear regression) were used. Afterwards, the operational definition of sustainable food security indicators and factors affecting household food security will be discussed.

3. Results

Results of the 1-sample t test shows that average dimensions of sustainable food security in the study area were less than desirable figures (3). This difference is statistically significant at the α level of 0.01 and has been estimated to be negatively evaluated.

4. Discussion

One of the most important factors on improving sustainable food security of studied rural households is their extent of relationship with city. The studies show that the extent of relationship between city and villages are influenced by factors like distance to Zanjan, the quality of connection roads, access to transportation vehicles, and dominant economy of the villages. It could be said that villages with more dominant economy in service sector have more connection with Zanjan City. The households with more connection with the city have more suitable status regarding the indexes of the food availability for the household, adequacy of food distribution centers, availability of food for children, and low cost access to food.

5. Conclusion

Low and stable food security of rural households in case study area is influenced by several factors. The status of employment in the study villages showed that 13.40% of households were headed by self-employed. These work-

ers mainly living in villages close to Zanjan city or main activities of workers in Zanjan city or is daily wages for. On the other hand, 4.1% of household heads are unemployed, so they are workers with unstable work activities and during the seasons of the year are unemployed, they have extreme vulnerability to fluctuations in food prices and declining purchasing power. Also by checking on the characteristics of employment, 4.90% of households lack jobs, 59.95% have one person working, 28.24% have two persons employed, 5.43% three individuals and 1.45% who have four and more persons are employed. Therefore, it is more than 60% of households in the study, were fed only by family members and due to the low wages of rural households more vulnerable to economic fluctuations.