

## **Measuring Food Security and its Determinants in Rural Areas: A Case Study of the farmers in the Central District of Ravansar, Kermanshah**

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### **Extended Abstract**

#### **1. Introduction**

Based on estimations by FAO, about 98% of the people around the world who face food insecurity and undernourishment live in developing countries, and a majority of them are from Asia and Oceania. Furthermore, the maximum ratio of undernourishment is seen in Sub-Saharan African countries. Since the majority of the citizens in developing countries live in rural areas, improving the level of food security of rural families is an important aim in developing countries. Studies reveal that the severity of food insecurity in rural communities is more than urban spots even though rural households are expected to have full access to foodstuff, regarding the type and amount, as food producers and providers.

Current conditions of the world suggest that in spite of the diversity of climatic conditions and increased productivity, the production and processing of various products, and significant economic and social advances, especially in the previous half-century, many parts of the world encounter food insecurity and malnutrition due to various reasons including extreme environmental degradation, climatic changes in addition to drought and lack of water, the rapid growth of population, low agricultural productivity, the lack of sustainable policies regarding food security, restricted access to infrastructures and basic services, civil wars, the instability of the macro-economic environment as well as the unsuitable policies of governments and, recently, the severe fluctuation of foodstuff and products.

#### **2. Theoretical Framework**

Food insecurity is among the most important obstacles against community development whose physical, psychological, and social destructive effects in

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addition to its threat to prosperity is proven. Therefore, the problems caused by the weakness in food security and food crisis are always a notable issue for governments and a subject of study for academic circles.

The consequences of food insecurity mostly threaten developing countries, especially their rural communities. Food availability and food security provision has been really insisted in the policies and programs of the economic development of Iran, as a developing country, between 1989 and 2005. Based on the registered reports in Iran, more than 80 percent of foodstuff is produced by the rural communities. The results of different studies show that food security of villagers in Iran, as the main suppliers of foodstuff in the country, is in a bad condition, and in the best case scenario, more than half of the rural population is in an unsafe food condition.

### **3. Methodology**

In terms of the essence and aim, the current study is quantitative and descriptive-analytical, respectively; in terms of the ability to control variables and data collection, the study is non-empirical and a field study, respectively. Generally, the study aims at assessing the situation of food security and detecting the factors affecting it among the farmers in the central part of the city of Ravansar. The time period of the study is single sectional and the required data was collected in the autumn. The statistical population of the study consisted of all the agricultural households' heads ( $n=3238$ ) in the central part of the city of Ravansar. Owing to the financial and time limits as well as inaccessibility to all the members of the population under investigation, 180 household heads were selected as the sample through Cochran formula.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

The findings of the study revealed that 21.1 percent of people studied have food security while 78.9 percent are experiencing different levels of food insecurity (no starvation, moderate starvation or severe starvation). Moreover, the results of multivariate regression revealed that 75.4 percent of the variable variance is as follows in the order of importance:

Land quality, access to credits, ownership of capital resources, an economic-social base, family size and contingency events; additionally, two variables of family size and contingency events with ratios of  $-0.143$  and  $-0.135$ , respectively, have negative effects on food security of farmers.

### **5. Conclusion and Suggestions**

Deprivation of rural areas in proportion to urban areas in developing countries, especially in Iran, is not limited to poor access to health, therapeutic, welfare, educational, and service facilities, job opportunities, and so on; regarding food security, which is one of the international development indices, rural areas are in poor conditions compared to urban ones. This is the result of the challenges and obstacles in the development of food security in the rural areas of the countries.

In order to improve food security within the area investigated in this study, improving the components of land quality, accessibility to credits, ownership of capital resources, and economic-social bases must be the priorities in future planning. Furthermore, due to the negative impact of two indices of family size and contingency events in food security, population reduction policies and villagers' abilities to encounter costly factors as well as contingency events, such as disease and divorce, must be reduced to minimum.

**Key Words:** Food security, Rural areas, Farmers, Ravansar county.

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