

Adaptive capacity and nutritional status of households in Cameroon

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Abstract

To cope with the various shocks that may occur in their lives, households emphasise their adaptive capacity in order to minimise the negative economic consequences they may experience, particularly in terms of food and nutrition security. This behaviour of households is a dimension of their resilience to food insecurity. The objective of this study is therefore to analyse how adaptive capacity promotes the nutritional status of households in Cameroon. Using data from the FSMS 2020 survey and statistical and logistic regression methods, the study reveals that physical and human capital contribute significantly to improving the nutritional status of households in Cameroon. These results therefore call for the strengthening of training and livelihoods to ensure better household nutritional status.

1. Introduction

The recurrent crises in sub-Saharan Africa in general and in Cameroon in particular raise real concerns for the achievement of sustainable food and nutrition security. The root causes of vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition are complex and multidimensional. They are linked to a series of interrelated factors such as poverty, health, hygiene, access to basic social services, dietary behaviour, socio-cultural norms, low levels of production, access to markets, inadequate public policies, as well as frequent climatic variations and other shocks, which result in large numbers of people being plunged into a state of near-permanent fragility (FAO, 2016).

An analysis of the impact of Covid 19 was conducted in the ten regions of Cameroon in September 2020. This analysis reveals the following results: firstly, the pandemic has been a real brake on production, affecting 42% of agricultural assets; secondly, it has caused an increase in post-harvest losses and a scarcity of basic foodstuffs; and thirdly, it has increased purchase prices by 3% compared to a normal situation. This situation is exacerbated by the socio-political crisis in the North West and South West regions, the floods and the security crisis due to Boko Haram in the Far-North and the influx of refugees in the East region due to the war in CAR. As a result, an estimated 2.7 million people were in crisis or worse between October and December 2020 (Minader et al., 2020).

An amount of 30 billion CFA Francs has been estimated to cover immediate livelihood needs, which are fourfold: material and technical support to short-cycle food producer organisations; provision of livelihood support to affected households; monitoring of market functionality and evaluation of food stocks; and building physical and monetary seed security stocks (<http://www.fao.org/cameroun/fao-au-cameroun/fr/>; accessed 04/03/2021).

In order to address this situation, which is continuously deteriorating the state of national food and nutrition security, the formulation and implementation of a national resilience programme is being considered by the

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