

Determinants of Household Food Insecurity in Nepal

—A Binary Logistic Regression Analysis—

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Agriculture remains mainstay for majority of the Nepalese population. However, agriculture in the country is still subsistence in nature. Hence, despite huge dependency in agriculture, 61% of farmers are not self-sufficient in meeting their foods; thereby are food insecure. There is paucity of information on food insecurity in the country due to absence of regular monitoring on food insecurity. In most of the literatures, especially in the government documents, food insecurity is assessed in terms of adequacy of the aggregate supply to fulfill the requirement of total population regardless of distribution issues based on regional and the socioeconomic differentiation of households. This implies the lack of understanding of the food insecurity issues on the part of the policy makers and planners. Therefore, this study is intended to breach the existing literature gap in understanding the food insecurity in the country. This article explored the food insecurity situation of the country including impact of various socioeconomic determinants on it. Nearly 52 percent of the households were suffering the food self-insufficiency, the first step of food insecurity calculation; in terms of food crops calorie requirement of households and availability from own farm production. The second step revealed that 10.2 percent of households were suffering the chronic food insecurity i.e. neither were they able to produce sufficient food from their farm nor were they able to earn the food security threshold income for deficit months. The proportion of the chronic food insecure households were higher among the female headed households, Occupational caste households, households with illiterate household head, household heads engaged in on-farm activities, household not having access to fertilizer and irrigation use, household not engaged in community organization (group activities) and household residing in the Mountain region. Dependency ratio and family size (adult equivalent) were higher among the food insecure household. Average landholding and fertilizer expenses were higher among the food secure household. With the highest and the lowest exponential value of coefficient obtained from binary logistic regression model, any program targeting Occupational caste and small landholding farm category or landless would contribute significantly to reduce the food insecurity. Any provision of opportunities for economically active age group to involve in economic activity reducing dependency ratio from 1.2 (economically active population) to 0.7 (economically active age group) can contribute significantly to reduce food insecurity through increased income. Significant positive coefficient of family size squared shows the increase in probability of being food insecure with the increase in family size. Access to irrigation contributed significantly to reduce food insecurity. A significant proportion of male headed households and households residing in Tarai able to be food secured justify the need of the program to target female headed household and household residing Mountain and Hills in any food insecurity resolving program. Participation of households in community organizations was negatively and significantly associated with food insecurity. Therefore, participation of vulnerable groups such as Occupational caste, female headed household, households with illiterate household heads, small landholding farm category or landless, and household residing in Mountain and Hills in community organization or targeting these community on food security programs can help reduce the food insecure household significantly through collective efforts. However, the paper would like to recommend further research to enhance the effectiveness of various community organizations.