

The Effect of COVID-19 on Food Consumption and Security

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Abstract

Agricultural and food markets were affected by the disruptions created by the restrictions on the mobility of people especially during the first lockdown in Zimbabwe from March 2020 to August 2020 and the subsequent localized lockdowns carried out in Zimbabwe. This resulted in loss of income among farmers and reduced food availability in towns. The purpose of the study was to assess the effect of Covid-19 on food security and consumption in Zimbabwe targeting Masvingo and Harare Provinces. Food consumption and security were measured using the rapid assessment method. The study used a questionnaire to obtain data on the food security and consumption from 489 respondents. The questionnaire was administered face to face. The results revealed that COVID-19 directly reduced access to food of the respondents in Harare and Masvingo province. Food insecurity in Harare and Masvingo province increased hence the need for policy makers and the donor community to assist the vulnerable people in Zimbabwe as a result of the pandemic to avoid food crisis. Results from Multinomial Logistic Regression Model established that households which are involved in informal trading and those that depend on labour income were more vulnerable resulting in reduced food consumption due to COVID-19 pandemic compared to other respondent categories. These results imply that government should prioritise households which depend on informal trading and those relying on labour income when providing safety nets during pandemics in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: COVID-19; food security; food consumption; Zimbabwe