Food and nutrition security implications of the residence of an agricultural extension agent in the community: Evidence from Malawi.

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Abstract

This article estimates the effects of the residence of an agricultural extension agent in the community on household dietary diversity score (HDDS), household dietary variety score (HDVS) and per capita consumption of macro and micro-nutrients using the nationally representative two-wave Integrated Household Panel Survey (IHPS) data of 2010 and 2013 for Malawi. Empirical analyses employ fixed effect models and the results suggest that the residence of an agricultural extension agent in the community has positive effects on food security. However, the results show consistently insignificant effects of subsidised fertilizer on all indicators of food security used in this study. These results suggest that policies which focus on promoting availability of agricultural extension agents in the community might be more effective and efficient in addressing food insecurity in developing countries compared to other policies. This highlight the importance of supporting provision of agricultural extension advisory services to farmers in order to contribute to achieving household and per capital food and nutrition security in agro-based developing countries.

Key words: Agricultural extension services, Food diversity, Macro and micro nutrients.

JEL Classification: Q1, Q16, Q18

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