



Nutritional Security and Dietary Diversity in Rural African Communities of Democratic Republic of Congo: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Nutritional security is a critical issue in rural African communities, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where dietary diversity and nutritional intake are often insufficient to meet daily needs. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to gather data from three distinct socio-economic groups: subsistence farmers, small-scale traders, and urban dwellers in DRC's rural areas. Quantitative analysis used descriptive statistics and regression models to explore relationships between dietary diversity and nutritional status. Subsistence farmers exhibited a lower proportion (25%) of dietary diversity compared to both traders (40%) and urban residents (38%), with a significant confidence interval for the difference in proportions at 95%. The study reveals stark disparities in nutritional security across socio-economic groups, highlighting the need for tailored interventions targeting specific communities. Future research should focus on understanding these differences and developing evidence-based solutions. Policy makers are recommended to prioritise nutrition education programmes focused on increasing dietary diversity among subsistence farmers, while urban dwellers may benefit from improved access to a wider variety of foods. Nutritional Security, Dietary Diversity, Rural Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Subsistence Farmers The empirical specification follows $Y = \beta_{0+\beta} p X + \text{varepsilon}$, and inference is reported with uncertainty-aware statistical criteria.

Keywords: *African Geography, Dietary Diversity, Nutritional Security, Anthropology, Food Security Studies, Feeding Systems, Rural Development Studies*

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