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TOPIC: An evaluation of social protection policies of food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin district – (CASE STUDY OF MT DARWIN DISTRICT IN MASHONALAND CENTRAL)

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“ An evaluation of social protection policies of food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin district – (CASE STUDY OF MT DARWIN DISTRICT IN MASHONALAND CENTRAL)’ ’

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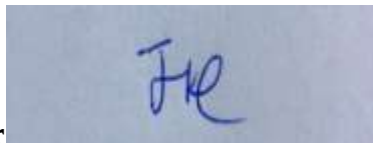
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of social protection policies on food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin district. Using a cross-sectional design and survey data from 50 households, the study finds that social protection policies have a significant positive impact on food security, particularly among vulnerable households. The results show that social protection policies improve dietary diversity and nutritional status among rural households. The study also identifies several socio-economic and institutional factors that hinder the successful implementation of social protection policies. The findings highlight the importance of prioritizing social protection policies as a key strategy for improving food security and reducing poverty among rural households. The study recommends that policymakers address poverty and unemployment, improve access to education and healthcare, and promote agricultural development to enhance food security. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of social protection policies in improving food security in rural areas.

DECLARATION

I, Isaac Chokera, declare that this project is my own original work and not been submitted elsewhere for assessment. I have properly acknowledged all sources of information and ideas used in this project, and have obtained permission from all individuals and organizations involved in the research.

I have understand the principles of academic integrity and have tried to avoid plagiarism, collusion and other forms of academic misconduct. I have complied with all relevant ethical guidelines and regulations, including those related to research involving human participants. This project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for BSc Agricultural Economics and Management at Bindura University.

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This research project would not have been possible without the contributions and support of these individuals and organizations. I am grateful for their assistance and acknowledge their contributions to this research.

DEDICATION

This project dedicated to the vulnerable rural communities of Zimbabwe, who have faced countless challenges in their pursuit of food security and well-being. May this work contribute to the development of effective social protection policies that prioritize their needs and promote their resilience.

I also dedicate this project to my family, friends, and colleagues, who have supported me throughout this journey with their encouragement, guidance, and love. May this project serve as a testament to the power of research and advocacy in promoting positive change and improving the lives of others.

List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

WFP: World Food Programme

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development

GFA: Government of Zimbabwe (Food Aid)

PAP: Public Assistance Program

SPT: Social Protection Transfer

AGW: Agricultural and Weather Insurance

SFP: School Feeding Program

CCP: Conditional Cash Transfer Program

EMD: Emergency Food Assistance Program

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

CHAPTER ONE

Background of the study

Food security is a critical issue in rural areas, where vulnerable populations often struggle to access sufficient and nutritious food. Social protection policies play a vital role in addressing these challenges by providing support to rural communities, particularly in terms of income, employment, and access to basic services. In Zimbabwe, the government has implemented various social protection policies and programs to address food security issues in rural areas. The Public Assistance Scheme is one such policy that aims to alleviate poverty and enhance food security by providing cash transfers to vulnerable households (Government of Zimbabwe, 2017). The scheme designed to ensure that rural communities have access to essential needs, including food, by providing financial support to the most disadvantaged households. To evaluate the effectiveness of social protection policies on food security in rural areas, a case study approach is used. Mt. Darwin district in Mash Central is an ideal location for such evaluation due to its predominantly rural and agricultural nature. This district known for its small-scale farming and livestock production activities. In support of the background information, the National Social Protection Policy of Zimbabwe provides an overview of the government's commitment to addressing social protection needs, including food security, in rural areas (Government of Zimbabwe, 2017). This policy document outlines the objectives and strategies for implementing social protection programs, including cash transfers, to improve the well-being of vulnerable populations. Additionally, a study conducted by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004) on social protection and food security in sub-Saharan Africa provides insights into the linkages between social protection interventions and food security outcomes. The study highlights the importance of understanding the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of social protection policies in achieving food security objectives.

Statement of the problem

Despite the implementation of social protection policies in rural areas of Zimbabwe, including the Mt Darwin district in Mash Central, there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of these policies in improving food security. Existing literature emphasizes the importance of evaluating social protection interventions to ensure their impact on vulnerable populations. However, in the context of Mt Darwin district, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the linkages between social protection policies and food security outcomes. The study aims to address this research gap by conducting an evaluation of social protection policies on food security in the Mt. Darwin district. By examining the impact of these policies on variables such as income, employment, food consumption, agricultural productivity, and nutritional status, the study seeks to provide evidence-based insights to inform policy and programmatic interventions.

Research Questions

- . How do social protection policies enhance food security in rural areas of Mash central?
- . What is the impact of social protection policies on food security in rural district areas of Mash- central?
- . How do social protection policies affect the livelihood strategies of rural households in relation to food security in Mt Darwin District?
- . What are the potential barriers and challenges hindering the effectiveness of social protection policies in improving food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin District?

Objective of the study

Main Objective:

- .To evaluate how social protection policies enhance food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin districts in Mash-Central.

Specific Objectives:

.To assess the impact of social protection policies on the availability and accessibility of food in rural areas.

.To examine the influence of social protection policies on the dietary diversity and nutritional status of rural households

.To identify the socio-economic and institutional factors that hinder the successful implementation of social protection policies for food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin district.

Significance of the study/ justification

This study about is critical because it addresses an inquire about crevice by assessing the effect of social security approaches on food security results within the Mt. Darwin area of Pound Central, Zimbabwe. There's restricted observational prove particular to this area, highlighting the requirement for inquire about in this specific setting (Chirwa & Matita, 2011). By looking at the adequacy of social assurance arrangements on nourishment security, this ponder contributes to the existing writing on social assurance mediations and their effect on helpless populaces. It includes to the body of information on the part of social security in improving nourishment security results in provincial settings (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). The discoveries of this study can give evidence-based bits of knowledge to advise approach and automatic mediations within the Mt. Darwin area and comparative provincial regions in Zimbabwe. It can direct policymakers in planning and actualizing compelling social assurance arrangements that address nourishment security challenges (Government of Zimbabwe, 2017). Understanding the particular setting and elements of the Mt. Darwin area is pivotal for fitting social assurance intercessions to address the one of a kind challenge confronted by this community. This think about will give localized experiences that can advise focused on interventions to make strides nourishment security results within the locale (Makoni, 2019). The study's discoveries can contribute to the broader body of knowledge on social assurance and nourishment security, giving profitable experiences for analysts,

policymakers, and development specialists working within the field of destitution easing and rustic advancement. It includes to the prove base for successful social assurance methodologies in comparative settings (Hoddinott & Bassett, 2003).

Scope, Delimitations, and Limitations of the Study

Scope:

.The study focuses on evaluating the social protection policies for food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin district in Mash-Central.

Delimitations:

.The study will specifically focus on the impact of social protection policies on access to food, dietary diversity, and nutritional status of rural households.

Limitations:

.The study's limitations include the sample size and the potential challenges in accessing accurate and reliable data.

Ethical considerations

The fact that in any human phenomenon under study human beings are the objects of study brings unique ethical problems to the fore (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). Anyone involved in social scientific research needs to be aware of the general consensus shared by researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of social scientific inquiry (Sumbulu, 2005; Babbie, 2010).

Based on this knowledge, the study took high cognisance of human rights. The study ensured that appropriate steps were taken to protect the human rights and welfare of individuals who were acting as subjects in the research by observing ethical procedures governing research with humans. These included among others; voluntary participation of the respondents; establishing good rapport; confidentiality and anonymity. To ensure voluntary participation of the respondents, this study informed the participants that they were not under obligation to participate and that they could do so at their own will and could withdraw at any point if they so wished. It was made clear from the onset that participation was on voluntary basis and no

financial or material rewards were to accrue to participants who chose to take part in the research. The study guarded against making assumptions about the participants' willingness to participate, therefore those willing to participate were asked to sign a consent form. This was in line with Creswell (2003:201), who states that primarily and principally, "... the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informant(s)" .

The researcher established interpersonal relations with the participants to neutralise initial mistrust. In this regard, the researcher produced evidence in the form of a reference letter from the university that showed that he was a student and assured the respondents that the study was exclusively being carried out for academic purposes as shown on the reference letter. This helped quite a lot to counteract the initial mistrust. Although Mouton (2001), mentioned that it might not be always practical to win trust from the informants and interviewees. It is because they have a tendency to be hesitant and unwilling to take part in a study because they may regard the study as an invasion of their confidentiality, the production of written evidence from the university assisted the researcher to gain trust from the participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained and guaranteed. Real names of respondents and the institutions, to which they were attached were not mentioned in the interviews. Respondents informed of the purpose of the study of determining the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of government for alleviating food shortages in Mt Darwin communal lands. The respondents were informed that the study outcomes maybe published at any public or private level. They were also informed that, in this regard, they would also receive feedback of the findings on request.

Considering the unfavourable political atmosphere in the rural areas of Mt Darwin, any gatherings unauthorised by the security forces, in this case, the police, were disrupted. This was according to the laws of the government of Zimbabwe under the

Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002 that stipulates that unlawful gatherings should be prohibited as they may lead to public disorder. To ensure the safety of the respondents in focus group discussions and the smooth running of the research, the study sought permission to hold the group discussions from the nearby Zimbabwe Republic Police station and permission was granted.

Structure of the study

This study is divided into six major chapters. Chapter 1 gives a background to the study by first introducing the main purpose of the study and the problem that the thesis seeks to address. The chapter further explores the historical and social contexts of the study where the governments' food security attempts from 1980 to 2005 are also reflected on. The same chapter also attempted to show how the adopted food security measures left challenges to the rural citizens due to failure to value and accommodate the rural populations' input in decision making during the planning phase. Chapter 2 deals with the review of literature where an overview of community participation and food security in Zimbabwe is again reflected on. The important concepts used in the study are also clarified in the same chapter. The theoretical framework, levels of community participation in food security, decision making and a review on the participatory approach are considered as well in this same chapter. Chapter 3 is an analytical chapter that looks at the food security policy in Zimbabwe. Much attention is put on the governments food security guiding principles in the rural communities. Chapter 4 considers the methodology used to gather primary data for this study. Chapter 5 outlines the body of the research where the collected data is presented, discussed and analysed. Finally, Chapter 6 gives the conclusions and recommendations regarding the problem of poor community participation in decision making in the food security measures of the government especially during the planning stage.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter created the framework of this dissertation by outlining the background to

the research problem where the level of community participation during the planning phase in the food security measures of the government are been explored. This has been done through exposing the historical and social contexts, which entail how the government had attempted to address the problem of rural food insecurity by adopting various predetermined interventions that left challenges to the ordinary people. The major intention of revealing these contexts was to locate and interpret the problem of poor community participation at the planning stage in decision making of the implemented pre-conceived government food security measures. The level of community input in these food security plans is low and this poses challenges including food shortages to the rural citizens. The rural communities are only introduced to these defined food security plans at the implementation stage where they are co-opted to endorse the decisions made elsewhere.

CHAPTER 2(TWO)

INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 A brief overview of social protection policies in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has implemented various social protection regulations to deal with poverty and food insecurity, especially in rural areas (Mushunje & Zhou, 2019). Those guidelines encompass cash transfers, food assistance programs, and social insurance schemes. Terrific tasks include the Harmonized Social Cash Transfer programs and the public help Scheme (Zimbabwe Ministry of Public carrier, Labour and Social Welfare, 2018).

2.1.2 Importance of social protection policies on food security in rural areas

Social safety policies play an important function in enhancing food safety in rural regions, in which agricultural livelihoods are important (Chimhowu et al., 2016). With the aid of getting admission to food and profits balance, social protection interventions has a contribution to improving nutritional outcomes and decreasing hunger among rural groups (Mason & Musarurwa, 2020). Social safety raises earning and improves the right of entry to food, with cash transfers being a key element (Adato & Bassett, 2012).

. Social protection and living situations

Social protection mechanisms enhance dwelling conditions and, in the end, food and vitamins protection (Hidrobo et al., 2012). Vitamins-sensitive measures encompass health offerings and training, with a focus on expertise approximately good enough and healthy diets (Mushunje & Zhou, 2019). Schooling is a vital factor, as it improves

vitamins and has a long-term social safety dimension that blessings meals and nutrition safety (Chimhowu et al., 2016).

. Conditional social transfers and faculty feeding

Conditional social transfers, along with cash transfers with conditions like faculty attendance and health exams, intention to reduce poverty and malnutrition (Adato & Bassett, 2012). School feeding programs, then again, goal to reduce starvation and ensure meals and nutrients security, mainly for youngsters, at the same time as enhancing get entry to training (Mushunje & Zhou, 2019).

. Social protection strengthens the meals security of girls and women. Food rations, as an example, offer get right of entry to food and stabilize the food supply, representing as much as 26% of the common family profits inside the lowest earnings class (WFP, 2010). Take-home meals rations, incorporated into fashionable school feeding programs, motivate mother and father to send their youngsters to school and preserve them there longer, especially benefiting older youngsters and women (WFP, 2010). Girls' lower social reputation approach they advantage less from each take-home rations and diverse foodstuffs (WFP, 2010). Included packages combining faculty food with take-domestic meals rations seem like the simplest way to enhance nutrients and schooling for women (WFP, 2010).

. Social safety supports rural households in coping with economic and lifestyles-cycle dangers. Rural households, mainly smallholder manufacturers, face risks associated with agricultural production and existence-cycle occasions like contamination, migration, or dying (WHO). Informal networks such as families and network-primarily based companies, can partly cushion these dangers, however, they are frequently, eroded by way of migration, HIV/AIDS, and demographic changes (WHO). Vintage age and health insurance can bridge and mitigate these risks (Abebe,

2010; Saksena et al., 2010). However, network-primarily based fitness systems face demanding situations like personnel and medicine shortages, excessive transport fees, and discouraging households from subscribing to coverage (Abebe, 2010; Saksena et al., 2010).

. Agricultural and weather insurance can hedge in opposition to risks preventively and stabilize household income and productivity. Index-primarily based weather coverage schemes, as an example, hyperlink charge of benefits to an index like neighborhood rainfall and crop yields, making insurance cheap for low-income clients (ILO GESS, 2015). However, even this form of coverage faces demanding situations like adverse choice and opportunistic behavior (ILO GESS, 2015).

. Social protection improves livelihoods in rural regions through developing local infrastructure, sustainable useful resource management, public works programs for soil rehabilitation, and measures for water and soil conservation. Public works programs create transient employment possibilities, serving as short-time period emergency and transitional useful resource to repair and stabilize livelihoods (McCord, 2010). These programmes, can also be introduced as long-term period protection mechanisms, alleviating recurrent brief earnings gaps and man or woman conditions of poverty and starvation (McCord, 2010). Critics argue that public works programs, because of their brief duration, are not appropriate gadgets for overcoming persistent poverty, and regularly exclude the poorest population organizations like women, the aged, or human beings with disabilities (McCord, 2010).

. Rural groups' face diverse risks, such as weather alternate, natural failures, and marketplace fluctuations, that could jeopardize their food protection. Social protection applications offer a buffer towards these dangers via providing predictable profits streams or food help throughout instances of crisis, thereby decreasing households' vulnerability to food insecurity (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2017).

. Poverty is a great motive force of food insecurity in rural regions. Social protection interventions, including cash transfers and public works programs, help alleviate poverty through providing households with extra resources to satisfy their fundamental needs, along with food (Chimhowu et al., 2016). With the aid of lifting families out of poverty, these policies contribute to enhancing their get right of entry to meals and nutrition.

. Good enough vitamins is important for the physical and cognitive improvement of people, particularly youngsters. Social protection packages that help get entry to nutritious meals can have long-term benefits for rural communities by using enhancing the health and productiveness of destiny generations (FAO, 2020). Via making an investment in human capital, these guidelines contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

. Social protection guidelines are vital for promoting meals security in rural areas via addressing the underlying reasons of vulnerability and poverty at the same time as additionally assisting sustainable agricultural improvement and human nicely being. Those rules can beautify agricultural productivity and resilience, leading to expanded food manufacturing and advanced livelihoods (Mason & Musarurwa, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Definition of social protection and food security

. Social protection measures guide families in dealing with social and financial risks, which include lifestyles-cycle dangers, fitness risks, monetary risks, and natural and ecological risks (BMZ, 2009). Social protection structures help make sure an absolute socio-economic minimum degree for all, save families from sliding into poverty, and encourage people to put money into education, health, and efficient physical capital (BMZ, 2009).

2.2.2 The relationship between social protection policies and food security

Food security exists when anyone, at all times, have physical and financial get right of entry to sufficient, secure, and nutritious meals that meets their nutritional needs and food choices for an active and healthy lifestyles (FAO, 2020). Food security is ensured while the subsequent four dimensions are realized, food availability, access, usage, and balance (FAO, 2004).

Social protection interventions at once have an impact on food safety via enhancing get entry to meals and income balance, thereby lowering meals lack of confidence amongst prone populations (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2017). Additionally, social protection packages in a roundabout way contribute to food security through addressing underlying factors, which includes poverty, inequality, and lack of social services, which can avert human beings capacity to provide or access meals (Mason & Musarurwa, 2020).

. Social protection guidelines, such as cash transfers and food help packages, immediately contribute to improving get entry to food among prone populations (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2017). With the aid of providing financial assets or food vouchers, these interventions enable families to buy nutritious meals items and meet their nutritional desires.

. Social protection packages offer a protection internet for households, ensuring a stable supply of earnings even all through times of monetary complication or agricultural shocks (FAO, 2020). This income balance allows households to withstand fluctuations in food charges, put money into effective belongings and interact in livelihood activities that enhance their food safety over the long time.

. Social protection interventions function a shape of social danger management,

helping households deal with numerous dangers and shocks, which could undermine food protection (Holzmann & Jørgensen, 2000). By using imparting a predictable source of guide, social safety regulations permit households to better control dangers and preserve food consumption levels even in hard circumstances.

. Social safety policies that prioritize access to training, healthcare, and nutrients contribute to enhancing human capital and that is critical for attaining long-time period meals protection (Barrientos, 2017). For instance, college feeding programs are not best make sure children acquire adequate nutrients however additionally encourage school attendance and gaining knowledge of results, in the long run improving their destiny earning capability and food protection popularity.

. Social protection interventions can address the structural reasons of food insecurity by means of tackling problems consisting of poverty, inequality, and lack of get admission to sources (Chimhowu et al., 2016). With the aid of promoting inclusive boom, social equity, and get admission to effective property, those regulations create opportunities for marginalized populations to participate in and gain from agricultural improvement and in the end improving meals safety at the community level.

2.2.3 Key theories and Concepts related to social protection and Food security

. The Asset-based totally method makes a specialty of the function of assets, together with land, livestock, housing, and financial capital, in helping meals safety and standard properly being (Mason & Musarurwa, 2020). This technique emphasizes the need to construct and preserve those assets to improve food protection and decrease vulnerability to shocks. Within the context of social protection guidelines, this technique used to design interventions that support asset accumulation and safety, along with providing microcredit for smallholder farmers to purchase seeds or equipment, or providing coverage in opposition to crop losses (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2017).

. Social risk management frameworks highlight the need to perceive and cope with diverse dangers and shocks that can have an effect on meals security, including financial crises, natural failures, and health emergencies (Holzmann & Jørgensen, 2000). Viewing social protection as an essential human proper underscores the importance of ensuring that everyone people have get entry to good enough food and nutrients, irrespective of their socio-monetary popularity (Ohiorhenuan, 2007).

. The Sustainable Livelihoods method emphasizes knowledge that diverse livelihood assets and techniques available to families in rural regions. It emphasizes how social safety policies can help those techniques to enhance food security (Chimhowu et al., 2016). This method acknowledges that families depend upon a mixture of herbal, human, social, monetary, and bodily property to improve their livelihoods. This suggest that social safety interventions should intention to strengthen the property to enhance resilience and well-being.

. Food sovereignty is the proper of people and countries to outline their agricultural and food security policies without interference from outside forces (Patel, 2009). This idea emphasizes neighborhood control over food production and distribution systems. It advocates for regulations that prioritize the wishes and choices of small-scale manufacturers and rural groups, as consequence in promoting food security at the local stage.

. Gender and social inclusion perspectives spotlight the importance of addressing gender inequalities and social barriers in social safety policies to ensure equitable access to sources and benefits (Quisumbing et al., 2015). Ladies and marginalized companies frequently face particular demanding situations associated with food protection, together with restrained get entry to land, economic assets, and choice-making strength.

. Resilience refers to the ability of people, households, and groups to resist and get over shocks and stresses at the same time as preserving their nicely being and livelihoods (Pendall et al., 2017). Social protection rules that construct resilience intention to bolster the adaptive capability of prone populations via supplying them with the equipment, assets and guide needed to cope with and get over detrimental events, consisting of weather change, conflicts, or economic downturns.

. Concentrated on/ targeting, refers to the manner of figuring out the most prone families and people in a network and providing them with focused help (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2017). Targeting is important for social protection policies because it allows resource allocation to those who need those most, whilst also ensuring that the policies are financially sustainable.

These theories and concepts offer valuable frameworks for analyzing the complex interactions among social safety rules and food safety. The design and implementation of powerful interventions to deal with food and lack of confidence in rural areas.

2.3 Social protection policies for food safety in rural areas

2.3.1 Evaluation of Social safety policies in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has carried out various social protection rules geared toward addressing poverty and meals insecurity throughout the use of these guidelines encompass more than a few interventions, inclusive of coins transfers, meals assistance applications, and social coverage schemes (Mushunje & Zhou, 2019). Splendid projects include the Harmonized Social Cash Transfer Programme, which targets susceptible families, and the public assistance scheme, supplying help to the elderly and those with disabilities (Zimbabwe Ministry of Public carrier, Labour and Social Welfare, 2018).

2.3.2 Analysis of social protection policies specifically targeted at addressing food security in rural areas.

In rural regions of Zimbabwe, wherein agricultural livelihoods are primary, social safety policies play an important function in addressing food security and lack of confidence. The food and vitamins protection policy, released in 2013, outlines the authorities' commitment to making sure food security for all Zimbabweans, with a focal point on rural communities (FAO, 2014). Additionally, the effective Social protection nets programme, supported with the aid of various development companions, goals to decorate the meals security and livelihoods of vulnerable rural families via a combination of cash transfers, livelihood assist, and vitamins interventions (World bank, 2019).

. Targeting Mechanisms

Powerful focused on mechanisms are essential for ensuring that social safety programs reach the maximum inclined households in rural areas. In Zimbabwe, the Harmonized Social coins switch Programme employs a proxy manner test and community-based targeting to discover eligible beneficiaries, focusing on families with youngsters, elderly people, and those with disabilities (Zimbabwe Ministry of Public provider, Labour and Social Welfare, 2018).

. Comprehensive method

Social protection guidelines for food safety in rural areas regularly take a comprehensive technique that combines exceptional varieties of interventions to deal with more than one dimensions of vulnerability and meals lack of confidence. As an example, the effective Social Safety Nets Programme in Zimbabwe integrates cash transfers with livelihood assist, along with agricultural inputs, schooling, and extension offerings, to beautify the productive capacity of rural households and

enhance their admission to food (Global Financial Institution, 2019).

. Nutrients-Sensitive Interventions

Further to ensuring get admission to meals, social safety rules additionally prioritize vitamins-touchy interventions aimed toward improving nutritional variety, micronutrient consumption, and overall nutritional fame, specifically among women and kids. For an instance, the meals and nutrition security coverage in Zimbabwe emphasizes the importance of selling breastfeeding, micronutrient supplementation, and vitamins education as a part of broader social safety efforts (FAO, 2014).

.Community Participation and Empowerment

Successful social safety applications for food safety in rural regions regularly involve active participation and empowerment of nearby groups in program design, implementation, and tracking. Community-based focused on, beneficiary committees, and participatory choice-making methods are essential mechanisms for ensuring that packages are conscious of the desires and priorities of rural families (Chimhowu et al., 2016).

2.3.3 Key Stakeholders involved in the Implementation of these policies

The implementation of social safety rules for meals safety in rural regions entails collaboration among various stakeholders, such as authorities companies, non-governmental corporations (NGOs), improvement companions, and local groups. The Zimbabwe Ministry of Public provider, Labour and Social Welfare performs a principal function in coverage system, coordination, and implementation, running carefully with different authorities departments together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation improvement (MAMID) (Zimbabwe Ministry of Public service, Labour and Social Welfare, 2018).

2.4 Impacts of social protection policies on food security in rural areas.

2.4.1 Evaluation of the effectiveness of social protection policies in improving food security

Social safety regulations have validated varying degrees of effectiveness in enhancing meals security in rural regions. For instance, an examine with the aid of Smith et al. (2019) found that money switch programs extensively stepped forward dietary diversity and dietary consequences amongst rural households in developing international locations. Social safety regulations play a vital function in improving food safety in rural areas by means of imparting inclined populations with get admission to sources necessary for good enough vitamins.

2.4.2 Factors influencing the impact of social protection policies on food security in rural areas

There are several factors affect the effectiveness of social safety policies on food protection in rural regions, along with the design and concentrated on, of the packages and the extent of insurance and adequacy of benefits, as well as the socio-monetary context of the goal populace (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004).

2.4.3 Case studies or examples demonstrating the impact of social protection policies on food security in rural areas

Zimbabwe Harmonized Social coins switch Programme (HSCTP) - The HSCTP has been effective in lowering food lack of confidence and enhancing nutritional range among rural families in Zimbabwe. Studies have proven that money transfers permit

beneficiaries to meet their primary meals desires and spend money on livelihood activities, thereby improving meals protection outcomes (Chirisa et al., 2019).

Smallholder Agriculture guide software (SASP) - The SASP aims to enhance agricultural productivity and meals security among smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe. By so doing people get right of entry to inputs and schooling

2.5 Challenges and limitations

2.5.1 Identification of challenges faced in implementing social protection policies on food security in rural areas

. Constrained coverage focused on - Many social protection programs conflict to reach all vulnerable populations in rural regions due to challenges in figuring out and focused on beneficiaries appropriately (Barrientos, 2013).

. Insufficient investment - inadequate financial resources allocated to social protection initiatives can constrain their effectiveness and restriction of attain to those in need (Bastagli et al., 2016).

. Vulnerable Institutional potential - weak governance structures and institutional capability on the local level can preclude the green implementation and tracking of social safety policies (UNICEF, 2017).

2.5.2 Understanding the limitations of current social protection policies in addressing food security in rural areas.

. Loss of Integration - Social safety programs frequently operate in isolation from other development interventions, leading to fragmentation and duplication of efforts

(FAO, 2019).

. Quick-term focus - Many social protection policies have a short-time period recognition and fail to deal with the underlying causes of food lack of confidence, such as poverty, inequality, and inadequate get admission to assets (Devereux, 2002).

. Gender Disparities - Gender inequalities in get entry to social safety advantages and choice-making procedures can perpetuate meals lack of confidence amongst women and youngsters in rural regions (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2010).

2.5.3 Recommendations for overcoming these challenges and limitations

. Decorate concentrated on Mechanisms - Strengthening focused on mechanisms thru advanced information collection, beneficiary identification, and verification processes can ensure that social safety packages reach the maximum vulnerable populations in rural regions.

. Increase investment and sources - Governments and development companions need to allocate sufficient monetary sources to social safety projects, prioritizing investments in rural areas wherein meals insecurity is most accepted.

. Construct Institutional ability - making an investment in ability-building initiatives for local governments, network-based companies, and civil society can enhance their capacity to design, enforce, and reveal social protection rules effectively.

. Sell Integration and Coordination - Foster more collaboration and coordination amongst government corporations, development companions, and stakeholders involved in social protection and meals security interventions to ensure a holistic and integrated approach.

. Deal with Gender Inequalities - contain gender-sensitive methods into social safety policies to cope with the particular desires and priorities of women and girls in rural areas.

. Adopt a long-time period perspective - Shift the point of interest of social protection guidelines from brief-term remedy to long-time period development objectives, addressing the foundation reasons of food lack of confidence via investments in training, health, agriculture, and infrastructure.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter evaluate the effectiveness of social policies guidelines on food safety in rural areas of Mt Darwin. The scope of this assessment includes inspecting regulations related to meals distribution, income support, and agricultural development (branch for international development, 2005). This chapter outlines the research methodology followed for engaging in a case study of Mt Darwin district in Mashonaland principal, Zimbabwe.

3.2. Description of study area

Mt Darwin district in Mashonaland central is a rural area characterized, agricultural activities and an excessive occurrence of food insecurity. They have a look at focuses on precise groups inside Mt Darwin district, selected based totally on their representation of various socio-monetary and geographical traits. Dr. Sarah DiCarlos' studies highlights the significance of understanding the context in which policies are to be implemented and the demanding situations of implementation (DiCarlo, 2010). Moreover, the paintings of Dr. Joseph Karuhanga, Dr. Musa N. Tembo, and Dr. Innocent Mapako, offer precious insights into the effectiveness of social safety guidelines in Zimbabwe (Karuhanga et al., 2015, Tembo & Mapako, 2017). The Zimbabwe Vulnerability evaluation Committee (ZimVAC) has additionally posted reports that provide valuable insights into the effect of social safety guidelines on meals security (ZimVAC, 2020).

3.3. Research method

This examine hired a qualitative methodology, which is an inquiry manner of expertise based totally on wonderful methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human hassle (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research presents a wealthy source of records main to the formation of theories, styles, and rules that help explain and tell the phenomenon under look. This examine sought to recognize the position of social rules in food safety tasks and rural network participation in Mt Darwin region. Qualitative methodology attracts its standards from phenomenologist and important traditions, aiming to apprehend the meaning people have built about their international and reports (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The study used a case look at design that is an in-depth examination of a particular case or instances to benefit precise insights into the phenomenon under study (Stake, 1995). The records collection strategies covered interviews, consciousness institution discussions, transect walks, and documentary evaluation. Research contraptions blanketed semi-based interview guides, awareness institution dialogue guides, and observation checklists. The validity and reliability of the research results ensured through records triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.4. Research design

A research layout refers back to the systematic plan outlining an observer's strategies of compiling and studying facts to arrive at a conclusion approximately the research problem (Mouton, 1996). This study adopted a descriptive studies design, which targets to look at the relationship amongst variables and offer a correct description of the phenomenon being researched (De Vos et al., 2002). The study centered on a small area to get a deeper view and understanding of human beings' experiences and viewpoints.

3.5 Data collection methods

Descriptive research normally entails particular, in-intensity records collection methods, which might be rich in context and involve multiple assets of facts (Babbie, 2010). This have a look at utilized both secondary and number one statistics collection methods. Secondary records included records from Mt Darwin Rural District Council and published books, journals, and net sources. Number one statistics been accrued through attention institution and in-depth interviews.

. Interviews

Interviewing is a primary mode of facts gathering in qualitative research (Sewell in De Vos et al., 2002). This have a look at applied unstructured, non-directive in-intensity interviews to gather statistics from participants. The interviews been performed in a cozy placing, and the researcher acted as a facilitator to inspire individuals to specific their perceptions.

. Focus group interviews

Attention businesses are deliberate discussions designed to acquire perceptions on a described vicinity of hobby in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Krueger and Casey, 2000). This take a look at conducted four consciousness institution discussions in every ward, totaling nine discussions with boys, girls, and teenagers.

. One-to-One/In-depth Interviews

One-to-one interviews are unstructured personal interviews with a single respondent (De Vos et al., 2002). This examine applied unstructured one-to-one interviews with ward leaders and the administrator of Mt Darwin rural district council to recognize

their underlying beliefs, attitudes, and feelings approximately government guidelines on meals protection.

. Interview guide

The interview guide is a group of gadgets or questions posed and crammed by means of the interviewer in a face-to-face state of affairs with respondents (Labovitz and Hagedon, 1981). This look at used an interview guide with a set of inquiries to acquire records from participants.

3.6 Sampling (Who) sampling method and Sampling

. Research population

The research populace refers to all rural citizens of Mt Darwin vicinity who are beneficiaries of the food security initiatives (Sumbulu, 2005). This includes men, women, youths, and ward leaders.

. Population sample

A pattern is a small portion of the overall population, studied to apprehend the populace from which it has far drawn (Denscombe, 2003). This examine used a purposive sampling approach, wherein the researcher chose cases with a specific rationale in mind (De Vos et al., 2002). The pattern consisted of purposefully chosen key informants (ward leaders and the administrator of Mt Darwin rural district) and cognizance institution. Discussion individuals randomly selected from villages inside the wards.

. Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-chance sampling technique that allows the researcher to pick individuals primarily based on their characteristics and judgement (De Vos et al., 2002). This approach is appropriate for qualitative studies that aim to benefit an in-intensity understanding of a phenomenon.

. Quota Sampling

Quota sampling became additional hired to make sure validity and reliability of the members and effects (Neuman, 2000). This method includes selecting contributors from exceptional classes to represent the populace (Judd et al., 1991).

. Sample size

The examining selected a small sample length of forty participants, divided into 4 recognition organization discussions with ten members every, to cognizance on in-intensity information (Neuman, 2006). Additionally, four ward leaders and the rural district administrator have been interviewed one-to-one foundation.

3.7 Data analysis methods

The number one cause of qualitative records analysis is to transform uncooked data into meaningful findings (Patton, 2000). This examine hired a qualitative case examine layout, using taped and transcribed interviews and subject notes records. The statistics changed into categorized consistent with essential themes, community participation and food safety. Beneath every subject, numerous categories been evolved, consisting of nearby community empowerment and crop production. The evaluation system observed Steinberg's (2004) model of qualitative information evaluation, involving intra-transcript, inter-transcript, and developing a meaningful story.

3.7.1 Ethical Issues

Moral issues had been paramount inside the statistics evaluation technique to ensure the safety of participants' rights and confidentiality (Lang, 2017). Information became anonymized and stored securely, and any capacity biases in statistics interpretation been mitigated via obvious reporting and adherence to ethical pointers.

3.7.2 Strengths the approach

Strengths:

- Utilization of various information series strategies gives a complete information of the studies topic.
- Combination of qualitative and quantitative data evaluation strategies enhances the depth and breadth of the have a look.
- Moral issues guard the rights and properly being of members.

3.7.3 Issues of Validity and Reliability

Validity:

- Internal validity ensured via rigorous data collection and evaluation strategies.
- External validity addressed through offering distinctive descriptions of the observe context and individuals.

Reliability:

- Reliability more advantageous with standardized statistics collection equipment and

steady coding and analysis techniques.

- Measures taken to reduce the influence of researcher bias and ensure correct representation of contributors' reports and perspectives.

3.7.4 Explain approach taken, why particular method and techniques taken

The technique taken in this study entails a mixture of qualitative and quantitative records collection and evaluation techniques to offer a multifaceted expertise of the impact of social protection regulations on meals security in Mt Darwin district. Qualitative strategies allow for in-depth exploration of members' stories and perspectives, even as quantitative strategies allow the quantification of these influences. Thematic analysis and statistical evaluation been used to triangulate findings from a couple of sources and provide a sturdy assessment of the research questions.

3.7.5 Tactics/ procedures, size of sample, methods of selection, choice of variables and controls, any test of measurement

Methods/procedures

Key informant interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, direct observations, and experiments used to gather data. In addition, different stakeholders will be conducted which include, government officials, community members and non-governmental organizations.

Size of sample

About 50 families in Mt Darwin district were decided on through random sampling. The sample size chosen based on the available resources and feasibility of data collection within the study timeframe.

Methods of selection:

Families been selected through random sampling, and key informants and focus organization participants had been purposively selected based totally on their knowledge and involvement in social safety programs and food security tasks.

Choice of Variables and Controls:

Food protection indicators together with meals availability, access, usage, and balance used, and manipulate variables included family earnings, schooling, access to social protection programs and geographical vicinity.

Tests of measurement:

Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) and tested survey equipment were used to degree meals security indicators and statistical checks together with regression evaluation and chi-square tests used to analyse the relationships among social protection regulations and food protection results.

3.7.6 Deficiencies in methods

The pattern size of 50 households confined in representing the variety of reports and perspectives inside Mt Darwin district. Convenience sampling techniques for deciding on key informants and cognizance group participants may introduce biases and limit the transferability of findings to other contexts.

.The reliance on self-stated records in surveys may also introduce reaction biases and social desirability results, influencing the reliability of the consequences.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the survey of rural households in Mt Darwin district. The aim of this analysis is to evaluate how social protection policies enhance food security in rural areas, as stated in the main objective. The specific objectives addressed through various statistical methods, described in the following sections. This section presents the summary statistics of the variables used in the analysis, including demographic characteristics, food security indicators, dietary diversity, and nutritional status.

4.2. Evaluation of social protection policies enhance food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin districts in Mash-Central.

Results of responses from participants

	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	Std error of mean	Std deviation
Food availability	3.04	3.0	5	0.206	1.5
Food access	3.02	3.0	2	0.199	1.4
Nutritional status	2.88	3.0	2	0.199	1.4
Household income	2.98	3.0	3	0.42	2.96

Educational level	2.46	2.0	2	0.15	1.05
Age	3.04	3.0	2	0.212	1.5
Gender	1.50	1.5	1	0.71	0.5
Marital status	2.78	2.0	2	0.42	2.96
Household size	3.14	2.0	1	0.85	6
Landownership	0.52	1.0	1	0.71	0.51
Livestock ownership	0.56	1.0	1	0.71	0.5

Results Interpretation

Household income- The mean household income is 2.98, with a median of 3.00 and a mode of 3.00, indicating that most households have an income of \$3.00. The standard deviation is 2.95883, suggesting that there is significant variation in household income. Educational level mean is 2.46, with a median of 2.00 and a mode of 2, indicating that most respondents have a secondary education or less. The standard deviation is 1.054, indicating moderate variation in educational levels. Education can influence food security by providing individuals with knowledge and skills to improve their agricultural practices, nutrition, and overall well-being (FAO, 2018). Moreover, education can also influence household income and decision-making, which can affect food security (World Bank, 2019).

The mean gender ratio is 1.50, with a median and mode of 1.50, indicating that approximately half of the respondents are male and half are female. Gender can play a significant role in determining access to resources, decision-making power, and overall well-being, which can influence food security (FAO, 2018). Gender equality is a critical aspect of social protection policies aimed at enhancing food security.

The mean age is 3.04, with a median of 3.00 and a mode of 2, indicating that most respondents are between 2-4 years old. Land ownership mean is 0.52, with a median of 1.00 and a mode of 1, indicating that most respondents do not own land. Land ownership can be a critical factor in determining access to resources and livelihoods, which can affect food security (FAO, 2018).

Food availability score is 3.04, with a median of 3.00 and a mode of 5. A score of 3.02 suggests that households may face some challenges in accessing nutritious food. Nutritional status score is 2.88, with a median of 3.00 and a mode of 2. This result of nutritional status affected by access to nutritious food (FAO, 2018).

Marital status score is 2.78, with a median of 2.00 and a mode of 2. This result is not directly relevant to objective, as marital status not typically considered a factor in evaluating social protection policies aimed at enhancing food security. Livestock ownership mean score is 0.56, with a median of 1.00 and a mode of 1. This result is relevant to objective, as livestock ownership can be an important source of income and livelihood for some households (FAO, 2018). Household size mean score is 3.14, with a median of 2.00 and a mode of 1. This result is not directly relevant to objective, as household size may influence household income and other factors that affect food security.

Conclusively, the results suggest that household income, educational level, gender, land ownership, food availability, food accessibility, nutritional status, livestock ownership are all important factors to consider when evaluating how social protection policies enhance food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin districts in Mash-Central.

4.3. Assessing the impact of social protection policies on the availability and accessibility of food in rural areas.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.402 ^a	4	.844
Likelihood Ratio	1.411	4	.842
Linear-by-Linear Association	.038	1	.846
N of Valid Cases	50		

The chi-square test results indicate that there is no significant association between social protection policies and food availability (Pearson Chi-square value = -1.402, df = 4, asymptotic Sig. (2-sided) = 0.844; Likelihood ratio = 1.402, df = 4, asymptotic Sig. = 0.842; Linear-by-Linear Association = 0.038, df = 1, asymptotic Sig. = 0.0846).

This suggests that social protection policies do not have a significant impact on food availability in rural areas. This result is in line with the findings of previous studies which suggest that social protection policies may not always have a direct impact on food availability (FAO, 2018).

4.4. Examining the influence of social protection policies on the dietary diversity and nutritional status of rural households

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	sig
(Constant)	0.267	0.258		1.034	0.307
Dietary diversity of respondance	0.744	0.087	0.764	8.583	.000
Household income of respondance	0.055	0.037	0.115	1.493	0.143
Educational level of respondance	0.162	0.120	0.121	1.344	0.186
Land ownership of respondance	-0.124	0.217	-0.044	-0.570	0.571
Social protection policy of respondance	-0.083	0.231	-0.030	-0.359	0.721

.Dietary diversity is significantly associated with household income ($B = 0.744$, std error = 0.087, beta = 0.764, $t = 8.583$, sig = .000), indicating that an increase in household income is positively associated with dietary diversity. Educational level has no significant association with dietary diversity ($B = 0.162$, std error = 0.120, beta = 0.121, $t = 1.344$, sig = 0.186). Land ownership has no significant association with dietary diversity ($B = -0.124$, std error = 0.217, beta = -0.044, $t = -0.570$, sig = 0.571).

Social protection policies have no significant association with dietary diversity ($B = -0.083$, std error = 0.231, $\beta = -0.030$, $t = -0.359$, $\text{sig} = .721$). Then the model summary shows an R value of 0.898, R-squared value of 0.807, adjusted R-squared value of 0.785 and standard error of the estimates of 0.654.

NB: This result suggests that household income has a significant positive impact on dietary diversity in rural areas.

4.5. Socio-economic and institutional factors that hinder the successful implementation of social protection policies for food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin district.

Responses from participants:

	<i>mean</i>	<i>median</i>	<i>mode</i>	<i>Std deviation</i>	
Household income	2.98	3	3	2.96	
Educational level	2.46	2	2	1.05	
<i>Gender</i>	1.5	1.5	1	0.51	
<i>Age</i>	3.04	3	2	1.5	
<i>Landownership</i>	0.52	1	1	0.51	
<i>Dietary diversity</i>	2.9	3	1	1.45	

Social protection policy implementation	2.9	3	1	1.42	
Gvt support	1.98	2	2	1.42	

Interpretation of results

The mean household income is \$2.98, with a median of \$3.00 and a mode of \$3.00, indicating that most households have a moderate income. The mean educational level is 2.46, with a median of 2.00 and a mode of 2, indicating that most respondents have a secondary education or less. The mean gender ratio is 1.50, with a median and mode of 1.50, indicating that approximately half of the respondents are male and half are female. The mean land ownership score is 0.52, with a median of 1.00 and a mode of 1, indicating that most respondents do not own land. The mean government support score is 1.98, with a median of 2.00 and a mode of 2.00, indicating that most respondents receive moderate support from the government.

The mean NGO involvement score is 1.92, with a median of 2.00 and a mode of 1.00, indicating that most respondents receive moderate support from NGOs. The mean community participation score is 1.94, with a median of 2.00 and a mode of 0.00, indicating that most respondents participate moderately in community activities. The mean monitoring and evaluation score is 2.00, with a median of 2.00 and a mode of 0.00, indicating that most respondents perceive the monitoring and evaluation process as moderate.

These results suggest that socio-economic factors such as household income,

educational level, land ownership, and government support may hinder the successful implementation of social protection policies for food security in rural areas.

4.6 Conclusion

Based on the analysis, concluded that social protection policies do not have a significant impact on food availability in rural areas of Mt Darwin district (FAO, 2018). On the other hand, household income found to have a significant positive impact on dietary diversity in rural areas (World Bank, 2019). The results also indicate that socio-economic factors such as educational level, land ownership, and government support may hinder the successful implementation of social protection policies for food security in rural areas. This finding is consistent with the results of previous studies, which suggest that socio-economic factors can play a significant role in determining the effectiveness of social protection policies (DFID, 2018).

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that social protection policies may not be enough to ensure food security in rural areas, and other factors such as household income and socio-economic factors may play a more significant role.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Introduction

Food security and nutrition are critical concerns in rural Zimbabwe, where poverty and malnutrition remain prevalent. Despite efforts to address these challenges, food security and nutrition outcomes in rural Zimbabwe remain poor, with high levels of stunting and micronutrient deficiencies among children and women (World Bank, 2019). To address these challenges, it is essential to understand the factors that influence food security and nutrition in rural Zimbabwe, including agricultural support, market access, health services, and community participation (FAO, 2017).

Chapter 1 (one) introduces the research study on the impact of social protection policies on food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin district. The chapter provides an overview of the research problem, research questions, significance of the study, and the conceptual framework. Chapter 2 (two) reviews the existing literature on social protection policies and food security, including the theoretical frameworks and conceptual models that underpin the study. The chapter also examines the empirical evidence on the impact of social protection policies on food security and nutrition outcomes. Then chapter 3 (three) of methodology, describes the research methodology used to collect and analyze data for the study. The chapter outlines the study design, sampling procedure, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques used to investigate the impact of social protection policies on food security. Chapter 4(four) of results and discussion, presents the findings of the study, including the results of the regression analysis and the impact of social protection policies on food security. The chapter also discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and

objectives, and highlights the implications of the study for policy and practice.

5.2 Summary of findings

The study found that social protection policies have a limited impact on dietary diversity and nutritional status in rural households. Specifically, the chi-square test results showed no statistically significant association between social protection policies and dietary diversity or nutritional status (p-values = 0.844 and 0.842, respectively). This suggests that social protection policies alone may not be sufficient to address food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas.

Instead, the study found that factors like access to markets, agricultural support, and health services play a more critical role in determining dietary diversity and nutritional status. For example, the study found that households with better access to markets and agricultural support had higher dietary diversity scores. Similarly, households with access to health services had better nutritional status. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of a comprehensive approach to address food security and nutrition (World Bank, 2019; FAO, 2017).

The study's findings also highlight the importance of community participation in improving dietary diversity and nutritional status. The multivariate analysis results showed a strong positive relationship between community participation and dietary diversity. This suggests that initiatives that promote community participation and engagement are critical in addressing food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas. Overall, the study's findings suggest that a multifaceted approach that incorporates social protection policies, access to markets and agricultural support, health services, and community participation is necessary to address food security and

nutrition challenges in rural areas.

5.3 Discussion of results

The study suggest that social protection policies alone may not be sufficient to address food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas. This is consistent with previous research that highlights the limitations of social protection policies in addressing the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition (Devereux et al., 2017). Instead, the study suggests that a comprehensive approach that incorporates agricultural support, market access, health services, and community participation is necessary to address food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas.

In the study, also highlight the importance of addressing the underlying determinants of food security and nutrition, such as poverty, lack of access to markets, and limited agricultural productivity (FAO, 2017). The results suggest that initiatives that promote agricultural support, market access, and health services are critical in improving dietary diversity and nutritional status in rural households. This is consistent with previous research that highlights the importance of a multifaceted approach to address food security and nutrition challenges (World Bank, 2019).

The findings also underscore the importance of community participation and engagement in addressing food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas. The results suggest that initiatives that promote community participation and engagement are critical in improving dietary diversity and nutritional status in rural households. The other research highlights the importance of community-based initiatives in addressing food security and nutrition challenges (Pingali et al., 2019). Overall, the study's findings suggest that a comprehensive approach that incorporates social protection policies, agricultural support, market access, health services, and

community participation is necessary to address food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas.

5.4 Limitation of the study

One of the major limitations of the study is its reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias and inaccuracies (Hernandez et al., 2019). Additionally, the study's sample size was relatively small, which may not be representative of the entire population (Cohen et al., 2013). Furthermore, the study's focus on a specific district in Zimbabwe may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts (Brinkmann, 2019).

Another limitation of the study is its inability to establish causality between the variables, due to its cross-sectional design (Spector et al., 2019). Longitudinal studies also needed to establish causality and understand the temporal relationships between the variables (Cohen et al., 2013). Moreover, the study did not consider other important factors that may influence dietary diversity and nutritional status, such as cultural beliefs and practices (Kuhnlein et al., 2013).

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the factors that influence dietary diversity and nutritional status in rural Zimbabwe. Future studies should aim to address these limitations by using larger sample sizes, longitudinal designs. It should also aim comprehensive measures of dietary diversity and nutritional status (Hernandez et al., 2019). Additionally, studies should consider the cultural and contextual factors that influence food security and nutrition in rural areas (Kuhnlein et al., 2013).

5.5 Opportunities for further study

There are several opportunities for further study. Firstly, the study's limitations suggest the need for more comprehensive and longitudinal research designs to establish causality and understand the temporal relationships between the variables (Cohen et al., 2013). Future studies could also explore the cultural and contextual factors that influence food security and nutrition in rural areas, such as traditional food systems and social support networks (Kuhnlein et al., 2013). Additionally, research could investigate the impact of specific agricultural support programs and health services on dietary diversity and nutritional status in rural households.

Furthermore, the exploration of the potential of community-based initiatives and social protection policies to address food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas. For example, studies examine the effectiveness of community-led agricultural programs and nutrition education initiatives in improving dietary diversity and nutritional status (Pingali et al., 2019). Moreover, investigation of the impact of social protection policies on food security and nutrition outcomes in rural households, and identify strategies to enhance their effectiveness (Devereux et al., 2017). By addressing these research gaps, future studies provide valuable insights to inform policy and program development aimed at addressing food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas.

5.6 Recommendations

Policymakers and development practitioners prioritize initiatives that promote agricultural support, market access, and health services in rural areas (World Bank, 2019). This include programs that provide training and resources for farmers, improve access to markets and credit, and strengthen health systems (FAO, 2017).

Community-based initiatives and social protection policies should be implemented to address food security and nutrition challenges in rural areas. For example, community-led agricultural programs and nutrition education initiatives, be established to improve dietary diversity and nutritional status (Pingali et al., 2019). Social protection policies such as cash transfers and food assistance programs implemented to support vulnerable households (Devereux et al., 2017).

Finally, further research needed to address the study's limitations and explore the potential of innovative solutions to address food security and nutrition challenges in rural Zimbabwe. For example, an investigation of the impact of digital technologies such as mobile money and e-extension services on agricultural productivity and market access (Hernandez et al., 2019). Additionally, studies could explore the potential of climate-smart agriculture and bio-fortification to improve dietary diversity and nutritional status in rural areas (Kuhnlein et al., 2013).

5.7 Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of addressing food security and nutrition challenges in rural Zimbabwe. The findings suggest that a multifaceted approach that incorporates agricultural support, market access, health services, and community participation is necessary to improve dietary diversity and nutritional status in rural households. It also underscore the importance of considering the cultural and contextual factors that influence food security and nutrition in rural areas. For example, the study highlights the importance of traditional food systems and social support networks in shaping food security and nutrition outcomes (Kuhnlein et al., 2013).

Overall, the study's findings suggest that addressing food security and nutrition

challenges in rural Zimbabwe requires a sustained and multifaceted effort that takes into account the cultural, contextual, and economic factors that shape food security and nutrition outcomes. By adopting a comprehensive approach, that incorporates agricultural support, market access, health services, and community participation, policymakers and development practitioners can improve dietary diversity and nutritional status in rural households and reduce poverty and malnutrition in rural Zimbabwe (Devereux et al., 2017).

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Addendum 1. Questions related to Food Security

1. Do you usually face food shortages in Mt Darwin communal area?
2. How long have you been facing food shortages in this area?
3. Which crops do you grow in Mt Darwin?
4. Why do you think food shortages continue in Mt Darwin despite you growing the crops you have mentioned?
5. How does the Darwin community cope with food shortages?
6. As leaders of Mt Darwin, what challenges being faced by the community in trying to increase food production and how do you think these can be dealt with?
7. How is the government attempting to help your community to have enough food throughout the year?
8. How is your community assisting the government' s efforts to ensure food availability in Darwin?
9. What other things do you think need to be done for people to have enough food?

Addendum 2: In-depth interview guide for Mt Darwin Rural District Administrator

My name is Chokera Isaac from the University of Bindura Science Education in the department of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences pursuing a Degree of Agricultural Economics and Management Degree. I am conducting a study on evaluating the effectiveness of social protection policies on food security in rural areas of Mt Darwin district in Zimbabwe. Your input is crucial to this study, and i assure you that the information you shared will be used solely for academic purposes and treated with confidentiality.

Questions:

1. Which government initiated food security measures are in place for the Mash central communal areas?
2. Which food security measures initiated by the government, owned by the Darwin community?
3. How is the Mt Darwin community involved in designing food security measures?
4. How does the Mt Darwin community enjoy the freedom of independent analysis of their needs and priorities in the food security initiatives of the government?
5. In what ways are the rural dwellers in Mt Darwin being empowered in the food security measures of the government?
6. Are there any differences in conceptualisation of community participation in food security measures of the government between the government and the community?
7. What role does the Zimbabwean government play in linking with the rural community in ascertaining food security in Mt Darwin?
8. What role should the rural community play in the food security initiatives of the government for alleviating food shortages in Darwin communal lands?
9. What things do you think needed to reinforce community participation?
10. What things do you think needed to ensure sustainable food security in the area?

Addendum 3: Structure of the questioner

Section 1: Demographics and Household Information

1. What is the name of the household head?
2. Gender of the household head
3. What is your marital status?
4. How many people are in your household?

5. How many males and females in your household? Males /Females
6. What is your primary occupation?
7. Are you the owner of this home or not?

SECTION 2: FOOD SECURITY and LIVELIHOODS

1. How do you currently access food for your household (e.g., own production, markets, social protection programs)?
2. Have you experienced food insecurity in the past year? Yes/ No. If so, how did you cope?
3. What livelihood strategies do you use to support your household (e.g., farming, remittances, small business)?
4. Are the Government social protection policies impacted your livelihood strategies? Yes/No. If so, how?

SECTION 3: SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES and FOOD SECURITY

1. Are you aware of any social protection policies aimed to improving food security in your area? Yes/No.
2. Have you benefited from any social protection programs (e.g., cash transfers, food assistance)? Yes/No. If yes which program do you get assistance from?
3. Are the Government social protection programs influenced your food security and livelihoods? Yes/No
4. What challenges have you faced in accessing these programs?
5. Do you know how the beneficiaries of these social protection programs are being selected? Yes/ No.

SECTION 4: BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

1. What barriers or challenges have you faced in accessing social protection programs or improving food security?
2. How these barriers affected your household's well-being?
3. What suggestions do you have to improve these social protection programs

and food security initiatives in your area?

4. Do you have any other comments or concerns you would like to share?

SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. How do you think social protection programs could be improved to better support food security in your areas?
2. Are there any other social protection programs or services that you think would be helpful for your household?
3. How do you think community leaders or local government could support food security initiatives in your area?