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Famine and household coping strategies

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Abstract

Households faced with risks to their entitlement to food will plan strategically to minimize their impact. The task of doing this will be particularly demanding during famines. This paper reviews the evidence on household strategies for coping with famine in Africa and identifies some distinctive patterns in these strategies which can be used to examine household objectives at times of crisis, the management of resources to meet these objectives and limits to the effectiveness of coping strategies. In particular it examines the role of asset management and trade-offs between maintaining current food consumption levels and protecting the future income generating capacity of the household.



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