



**THE ROLE OF COCOA GROWING IN INCOME AND FOOD  
SECURITY OF SMALLHOLDER FARMERS – A CASE FROM  
THE ASHANTI REGION OF GHANA**

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## ABSTRACT

Over the years, the upsurge of food insecurity and poor nutritional status of many smallholder farming Families have been blamed on the adoption of cash crops. The study investigated the case of smallholder cocoa farmers in Ghana. The objective of the study was to assess the impact of cocoa farming on the living standard of farming families by comparing the income and food security status in cocoa and non-cocoa growing systems. The Tepa district of the Ashanti Region, Ghana was selected for the case study. A justified sampling of 6 farmers each of cocoa and non-cocoa growing from 5 communities was conducted. A standardized questionnaire with emphasis on women was used to conduct the interview. Households provided data on family income, off-farm activities, household expenditures, food security and other measures of living standards. Descriptive statistics and comparative analysis of the interviewed farming systems were made to determine their similarities and differences. The family income of cocoa growing families was comparatively higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) than non-cocoa growing families. Income per capita was also higher among cocoa than non-cocoa growing families ( $p < 0.05$ ). Parallel consumption and expenditure pattern of families from the two systems were observed. However, cocoa growing families spend higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) amount on food, clothing and textiles and family festivities and events. All other non-food expenditures were not different ( $p > 0.05$ ). The mean cumulative analysis of household's food security coping strategies indicated that cocoa growing families are more intended to be food secured than non-cocoa growing families. Relations between food consumption and family income also indicated that income alone cannot account for the food consumption pattern of families and hence the nutritional needs of household members ( $r^2 = 0.236$  and  $p < 0.05$ ). Other factors – mainly family size in this case – have much bigger role to play in determining the food security of families ( $r = 0.486$  and  $p < 0.05$ ).