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**Household Food Security in Malawi: Measurements,
Determinants and Policy Review**

Master Thesis

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SUMMARY

Food insecurity in Malawi is both chronic and transitory in manner where 50 percent of the population runs out of food 4 to 6 months before harvest, and 40 percent are unable to satisfy their basic calorific needs. In attempt to solve the problem of food insecurity the government has intervened by free distribution of production inputs, and recently through fertiliser subsidy programme. Despite these interventions food insecurity remains a problem in many parts of the country. Therefore there is a need to find a root cause of the food insecurity problem so as to come up with better interventions and achieve sustainable food security. Hence the main objective of the study was to examine the determinants of household food security and review the policies that have been implemented to ensure food security.

Using the food expenditure data captured in Module I of the second Malawi Integrated Household Survey (IHS2), household's calorie consumption in per adult equivalent was calculated. To categorise the households as food secure and food insecure, a cut-off point was set at 2228kcal/aeu/day. Households were deemed food secure if their consumption was above 2228kcal/aeu/day and food insecure if it falls below. Socioeconomic characteristics of food secure and food insecure households were compared using descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests. Binary probit model was used to model the determinants of household food security. Primary qualitative data used in this study was collected through focus group discussion in Zomba district. Using explorative analysis, the perceptions and opinions of household's head on food security programmes in Malawi was analysed. The outreach of the food security programmes was assessed based on the undercoverage and leakage rates of the programme.

The findings reveal that landholding size, Education level of household; livestock holding size household size, Access to credit, Infrastructure and off-farm enterprise are the main determinants of household food security in Malawi. The review of the policies revealed that the main focus of the government has been on input provision to the poor smallholder farmers. Further to this the outreach assessment revealed that there are problems in targeting the programmes to the poor because even the non-poor benefited from the programmes. This was reflected in the higher undercoverage and leakage rates of the programme.