Thesis title: What Do Standard Measures of Poverty Not Explain;
Evidence from Tanzania's Daily Data

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Abstract

Food poverty accounts for over 18 percent of all households in Tanzania. This Sub-Sahara African country has over 70 percent of its population living in rural areas and whose economic activity is mainly farming of food crops. Yet, it has this percentage of its households' members not being able to meet at least 2200 kilo-calories per day; a minimum required for an adult individual to be able to perform normal daily activities. Most food poverty studies so far published have used monthly aggregates to arrive at the poverty headcounts, even in the presence of detailed daily food consumption data. This research work has made use of detailed daily food data collected in Tanzania to analyse patterns of food poverty on a daily basis and comparison have been made with the aggregated (monthly) food poverty measure. It has come out with findings that even some households that are non-food-poor on a monthly aggregate measure, they still do experience food poverty on daily basis for up to 18 or more days in a month. It has also found some interesting results that are related to how various determinants of poverty measures we discuss in this report are sensitive to censoring of spells of poverty. On another important aspect of food poverty which has been studied by other researchers, the seasonality aspect, the results have shown the two far apart months (January and July) to be the most difficult ones for most households. The issue for further research might be how useful can the central issues brought out by this research (days of food poverty, number of poverty spells, mean spell, maximum spell, and censoring) be to defining extreme poverty and designing of policies that can help eradicating the problem in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Tanzania, household, food poverty, days of food poverty, spell, censoring.