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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND INDUSTRIAL
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**INTERDISCIPLINARY HONOURS IN DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES**

**THE IMPACTS OF RISING FOOD PRICES IN AN URBAN
AREA. A CASE STUDY OF MBARE, HARARE, ZIMBABWE.**

BY

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**Research Project Submitted to the University of Fort Hare in
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Honours Degree in Development Studies.**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is the product of my work and where I have used ideas and words of others, I have referenced correctly.

Dated at _____ this day ____ March 2011.

Signed _____

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family for their tireless support and for making it possible for me to be writing this. Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I sincerely acknowledge the support, guidance and patience of my supervisor, Dr. P. Moyo, thank you. Ms B. Mandimutsira for all her support and guidance and for taking time off her busy schedule, thank you. Ms. J Masvaure for assisting me in the data collection, it was much appreciated. To the respondents for taking time to answer and participate in the study. Above all to God, for seeing me through.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impacts of rising food prices on household food security within an urban setting with specific reference to Mbare which is located in Harare, Zimbabwe. A qualitative design and simple random sampling were used. Semi structured interviews and questionnaires were used as the major instruments for data collection. 20 participants were interviewed. Results of the study show that Mbare residents generally have bigger household sizes and low levels of education which impact on their food security as less people are formally employed translating to less income and food insecurity. The greater percentage of households sampled have people in informal jobs who engaged in several projects to mitigate the effects of these high food prices. The main source of acquiring food that they need for their daily sustenance is mainly through urban agriculture, followed by vending and hoarding for resale.

ACRONYMS

BEAM	BASIC EDUCATION ASSISTANCE MODULE
FEWSNET	FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK
CCZ	CONSUMER COUNCIL OF ZIMBABWE
AFC	AGRICULTURAL FINANCE COOPERATION
RBZ	RESERVE BANK OF ZIMBABWE
GDP	GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the impacts of rising food prices on the urban working class, low income earning and poor households in Mbare high density township in Harare, Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, the food crisis impacted on those in the urban and rural areas; particularly those that could not afford to purchase any food due to the increase in prices. Mbare residents generally have bigger household sizes and low levels of education which impact on their food security as less people are formally employed translating to less income and food insecurity. The greater percentage of households sampled has people in informal jobs who engaged in several projects to mitigate the effects of these high food prices. The availability of food provisions in households is primary with all the other things coming in secondary as exhibited by preference of households to be food secure versus educating their children.

1.1 CONTEXTUALISING FOOD SECURITY

This study defines food security as:

“A situation that exists when all people, at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2003).

South Centre (1997) describes food security as access to food for a healthy life by all people at all times. Food security focuses on being able to meet the food needs of all the people within a given area, therefore the ways in which these needs are met should be reliable. Food security can be related to Sen (1981) entitlement approach, which describes all legal sources of food which are production-based entitlement (growing food), trade-based entitlement (buying food), own labour entitlement (working for food), and inheritance and transfer entitlement (being given food by others) (Sen, 1981).

On the other hand, food insecurity is deprivation such that people lack sustainable physical or economic access to food for a healthy and productive life (FAO, 2003). Within most developing countries the root causes for food insecurity are either man-made or natural. The natural causes are those that we do not have control over, for example droughts due to global warming, insect plagues and floods. Manmade causes are those that are a result of human influence for example war, civil conflict, corruption, national policies that do not promote equal access to food for all, food prices fluctuation, household disposable income (earnings), population, agriculture production and manufacturing (FAO, 2003).

Rising food prices may lead to food insecurity amongst a group of people but it does not always cause famine. There are certain groups of people that are more vulnerable than others for example victims of conflicts, migrant workers, marginal populations, dependent populations and women of reproductive age. However the causes are closely related because a rise in food prices for an already poor household will negatively impact on their food availability.

According to Smith (2003), food insecurity is dynamic in nature and can be defined by a sequence of events and experiences which can be considered in terms of their frequency, duration and periodicity that they happen. Because food insecurity is experienced on different levels it is easier to distinguish; these levels are the individual, household and national levels (Smith, 2003). The individual level involves a person's food consumption and their physiological sensation of hunger. On the household level, food insecurity involves the supply of food, how it is acquired as well as how it is managed within a household, (Smith, 2003). However within the same household individuals experiences may differ for example an adult can choose to give a child their food for them to eat thus experiencing the impacts of food insecurity on different levels. Therefore from this example we can say that food insecurity is a manageable process, because its events and experiences can be controlled and are predictable (Smith, 2003:45). At a national level, food insecurity due to the rising food prices affects the whole country, for example a country may have a surplus of food storages but still have people suffering from a lack of food. A healthy food market is based on the production of that local economy which determines the prices of the food. If cash crops are

not being produced at the national level and the government relies on imports, prices are most likely than not to rocket up (Smith, 2003).

Rising food prices may lead to food insecurity within a country. However one has to get a clear distinction between food insecurity and hunger. Food insecurity may not necessarily lead to hunger within a country; it is merely the unfair redistribution of food amongst different social groups (Sen, 1981). Food insecurity addresses the issues of food availability, affordability, and consumption in relation to the food prices as well as accessibility for the majority which make up the country's population (Sen, 1981).

1.2 RESEARCH SETTING

This research was done in Mbare high density suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe. Mbare was the first to be established in the Southern part of central Harare in 1907. It is located near the cemetery, sewage works and abattoir. At its birth it was a township for black people who were mainly migrant workers from local rural areas, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi. This influx of people coupled with the relocation of Mbare Suburb to a larger area resulted in urban development.

According to Barbara (2000), in 1981 the city council developed Mbare's trading area and they adopted the idea of communal markets as those that were found in China. The council also built flats and hostels namely Matapi flats and Mbare hostels to accommodate seasonal male workers who would work and return to their families in rural areas. In 2000, Mbare consisted of 1450 semi-detached dwellings in various stages of transformation which mainly accommodated the married couples (Barbara, 2000). It was and still is highly populated with an average of between 3 to 8 people within a household. Consequently it has the largest food, vegetable, curio and second hand clothing market in the country. Farmers from all over the country deliver their fresh produce for sale and resale daily at the Mbare musika market. Mbare musika is also a major transport hub linking buses to destinations in Zimbabwe and across the borders thus making cross border trading a popular coping strategy to rise in food prices amongst the Mbare residents. The mainstay of the economy of Mbare lies in trade and

transport. Mbare is a typical example of an ever-growing, dynamic population. It is therefore an ideal community to study while researching on the impacts of rising food prices on a household in an urban population.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research discusses an increase in food pricing as a contributory factor, leading to a food crisis resulting in food insecurity in an urban area in a developing country, Mbare, a high density suburb in Harare; Zimbabwe.

The research assists to establish the residents coping strategies in an effort to reduce or prevent the effects of a food crisis due to an increase in food prices; which may result in food insecurity at a household and national level.

This research uses a comparative perspective which looks at food insecurity before and after the dollarisation such that we will be able to look at the impacts of the rising food prices across a period of time from 2008 to 2010. It also analyses the coping strategies used by the urban poor before and after the dollarisation of the Zimbabwean currency.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by 3 research questions which are:

- How has the rising food prices impacted on the urban working class and poor in Mbare, Zimbabwe?
- What are the coping strategies that the urban poor have employed?
- What has the Zimbabwean government done to address the issue of rising food prices?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives are:

- To examine how rising food prices have impacted on the urban working class and poor.
- To examine how those in the urban areas have responded to the crisis and the coping strategies that they employed.
- To examine the public safety nets placed by Zimbabwe to assist the urban poor.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study is to discuss the impacts and coping strategies of the rising food prices leading to food insecurity. It also looks at how the urban poor in the high density areas benefit from the safety nets placed by the Zimbabwean government.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research uses Sen (1981) entitlement approach. Sen entitlement approach argues that famine occurs not only from lack of food, but also from inequalities built into a mechanism for distributing and accessing food. The entitlement approach describes all legal sources of food which are reduced to four categories: production-based entitlement, (growing food), trade-based entitlement, (buying food), own labour entitlement (working for food), and inheritance and transfer entitlement (being given food by others) (Sen, 1981). In his argument he points out that an individual will starve if their entitlement set does not provide them with adequate food for survival.

The entitlement approach shifts its focus from a fixation on food supplies (the Malthusian logic of too many people, too little food), onto the inability of particular groups of people to acquire food (Sen, 1981). However, famine can occur even if food supplies are adequate and markets are functioning well but in the case of the research on Zimbabwe, the opposite is true. Sen (1981) further argues that famine can be caused by exchange entitlement decline that is the exchange value of the endowments for food, for example, falling wages, livestock

prices, raising food prices as well as direct entitlement decline, which encompasses, loss of food crops from drought.

The entitlement approach has three major strengths to it. The first one being that attention is directed away from the conventional supply-side analysis of food crisis and focuses it towards a treatment of them as symptoms of the demand failure instead (Devereux & Maxwell, 1993:69). Sen gives an example to this, “even in the case of food blockades, where supplies of food are simply denied to an entire region, the wealthy, and well connected invariably survive longer and more comfortably than the poor, because of inequalities in their respective entitlements,” (Sen, 1981, cited in Devereux and Maxwell 1993).

The second advantage of the entitlement approach is that it focuses on access to food for individuals or groups within a society avoiding the misleading generalizations of gross aggregation (Devereux & Maxwell 1993:69). This would be of an advantage to the research which will aim to focus on different groups within the urban areas because of the different impacts it has on each individual. As explained above in the first advantage that, the wealthy and those that are well connected survive longer hence they are impacted by the rising food process differently as compared to the poor. However there are critics to this second advantage who argue that if Sen focuses the access to food individually then it brings about confusion as to whether what he is describing is starvation or famine,

“Whether a person is able to establish command over, say, enough food to avoid starvation depends on the nature of the entitlement system operating in the economy in question and on the person’s own position in that society. Even when the over-all ratio of food to population is high, particular occupation groups can perish because of their inability to establish command over enough food,” (Sen, 1981).

The third advantage is that the entitlement approach permits analysis of famines that occur within periods that are called the ‘boom’ and ‘slump’ periods. The boom famine is whereby there is high food demand and prices that do not tally with the wage increases of agricultural labourers as compared to those in the urban areas who are protected by the food rationing at controlled prices (Devereux & Maxwell, 1993:70). A slump famine is due to direct failure for example the loss of crops during a drought season (Devereux & Maxwell, 1993:70).

There are five weaknesses to the entitlement approach. The first weakness according to Sen (1981) is that an individual's entitlements may be ambiguously specified especially in those societies that property rights are not clearly defined. The second weakness is that, famines according to the entitlement approach are characterized by being excessively legalistic (Devereux & Maxwell, 1993:77). By use of the term 'excessively legalistic' Devereux & Maxwell are trying to bring out the concept of a deterioration in morals that comes with this approach, which include migration which he terms, 'the abandoning by men of their families'. The third weakness is that, it cannot explain excess deaths which are not related to starvation (Devereux & Maxwell, 1993:77). This then does not make it accurate because there are factors that are associated with famines for example diseases due to overcrowding, thus they will not be recorded. The fourth weakness is that the entitlement approach assumes that people that are starved will consume as much food as they can (Devereux & Maxwell, 1993:77). This statement clearly rules out that some people starve by choice because there are other things that they deem more important than food. The fifth weakness is that when hunger strikes most households, the rationing of food that is consumed within that household is an immediate response and is thus universal to everyone that is faced by this (Devereux & Maxwell, 1993:77). This does not necessarily follow as some people prefer being hungry than having to sell away some of their assets to access food.

Sen's entitlement approach has however been criticized by Nayak (2000) who argues that famine cannot be discussed without tracing into account aggregate food supply. He further notes that the entitlement theory of Sen (1981), fails to recommend food inputs by focusing exclusively on distribution and ignoring aggregate shortage. Devereux & Maxwell (1993) cited the example of the famine of the Wollo province in Ethiopia to criticise the entitlement approach. He contended that this famine had the elements of both FAD and FED (food entitlement decline). De Waal (1990) cited the famine of Sudan in Africa to criticize the entitlement approach. The entitlement approach allows vulnerable groups to be identified. Devereux & Maxwell (1993) also point out that the entitlement approach suggests more interventions that are appropriate.

1.8 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This research is restricted to the study of Mbare population and not the whole of Zimbabwe. Such a small case study might make it unrealistic to generalize the findings to the whole of Zimbabwe. Some people were also not willing to participate in the research for personal reasons like not feeling comfortable to discuss their personal lives with the researcher. The language spoken in the area of research is Shona, and most field work was conducted in this language. The researcher therefore faced a challenge in interpreting some of the findings as they had to be translated to English.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, the researcher made use of the following ethical considerations, anonymity, voluntary participation and confidentiality. The researcher assured the participants that they will remain anonymous; unless they are willing to disclose their names otherwise their names will not be mentioned. The researcher did not force the participants to cooperate but rather respected their privacy and decisions in participating. The researcher also assured participants that their responses will only be used for academic purposes only.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 1

This chapter introduces the research's background, statement of the problem, research questions, and research objectives, significance of the study, theoretical framework, research limitations and ethical consideration and the organisation of study.

CHAPTER 2

The literature review, presents a logical organisation of the impacts on increase in food prices in an urban population. The review discusses and analyses the impacts and coping strategies of food pricing leading to food insecurity. The researcher concisely demonstrated how specific studies in food pricing versus food insecurity impact on urban populations. Each of these specific discussions includes specific information about the group involved in the

research project, data and results reported. A relation of the literature to the ongoing research: The impact of rising food prices in urban areas with reference to Mbare, Harare, Zimbabwe was established.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter focuses on the research methodology, methods and research materials. The researcher discusses the qualitative approach, the methods used, what they mean, the precedent for these and the reasons for using them versus other similar methods.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter looks at the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings. Data is presented in detail in the forms of figures and statistics which make it easy for future duplication of the study, giving a direct indication on the reliability of the study. The research hypothesis and purpose of the study is taken into consideration when analysing the data. The data analysed is used to understand the meaning of the results, and if they can be interpreted in multiple ways. This interpretation of the findings has a positive or negative reflection on the hypothesis.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5 summarises the results in relation to the hypothesis. A discussion of the most important findings is given. The researcher discusses what needs to be done in the case of rising food prices that may lead to food crisis leading to food insecurity in an urban area. Recommendations for future study are also outlined and discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature on the macro economy, food insecurity and public safety nets in Zimbabwe. This review is guided by the study's three research questions which are:

1. How has the rising food prices impacted on the urban working class and poor in Mbare?
2. What are the coping strategies that the urban poor have employed?
3. What has the Zimbabwean government done to address the issue of rising food prices?

2.1 MACRO ECONOMY OF ZIMBABWE

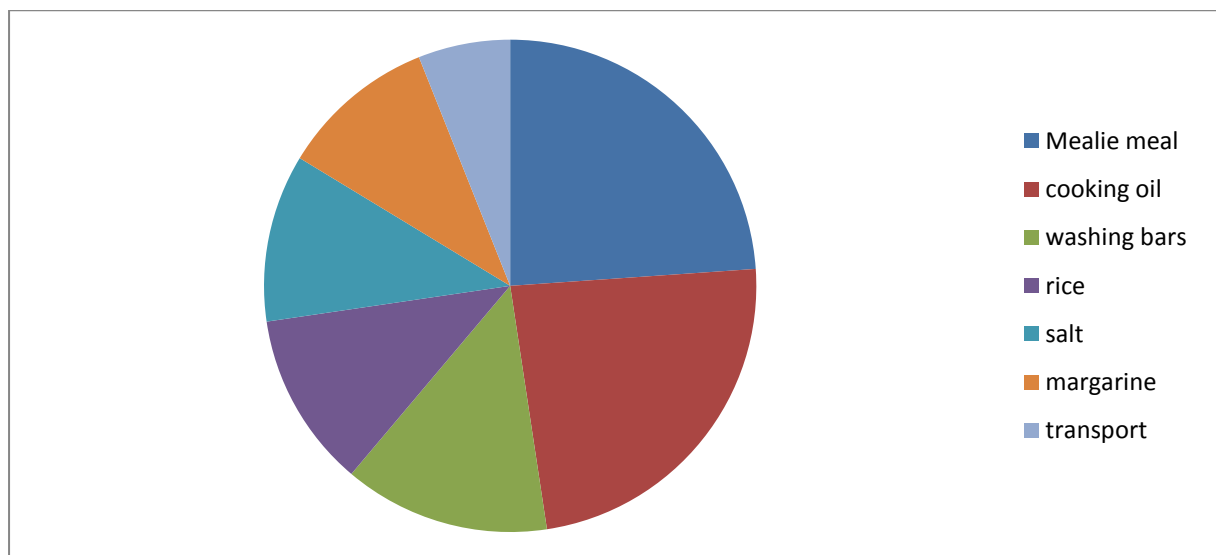
Zimbabwe's economic structure rests upon agriculture, tourism, mining and manufacturing. The favourable climatic conditions and the availability of land led to thriving agricultural activities. Agriculture addresses issues on poverty alleviation, natural resource management, land use and agricultural productivity (Mawere, 2009). It has played a central role in the economy of Zimbabwe since 1980 and the government has supported it throughout the years by providing farmers with inputs such as fertilizers, seedlings as well as supporting communal land development programs (Mawere, 2009). Consequently Zimbabwe was crowned the bread basket of Africa (Matsalaga, 1996), because of the agricultural sectors proceeds which had the neighbouring countries relying on it.

In the last two decades, Zimbabwe experienced a food crisis due to manmade and natural causes. The general global warming phenomenon affected the climate of Zimbabwe leading to periods of dry spells. The drought of the year 1991-1992 resulted in a decrease in agricultural food production, fuelling food insecurity (Matsalaga, 1996). Since agriculture was the mainstay of Zimbabwe's economy, the decrease in agricultural production led to an unstable economy. This unstable economy led to less food production and availability which

led to food insecurity. According to Kamidza (2009), more than 6 million people required food aid by April 2009, over 80 percent were living below the poverty line and over 1 million children were orphaned due to food shortages.

Between 2002 and 2008, the Zimbabwean economy was faced with a devastating problem of inflation. According to Mawere (2009) inflation averaged 61.7 percent from 1997-2002 and rose from 18.8 percent in 1997 to 135.1 percent in 2002. That was the beginning of sky rocketing hyper inflationary levels which rose to, “231 million percent by July 2008,” (Mawere, 2009). As the collapse of the economy and the agricultural system impacted on the rise of food prices, inflation was one of the direct impacts to the rising food prices. Due to the rise in inflation, according to the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe the cost of living in the year 2006 for a family of six during the month of October, an estimated amount of Z\$141 706.79 was used and this increased by 47.3% by November to Z\$208 714.84. The diagram below represents this:

Fig 1a: Year 2006, before the dollarisation



Source: Author 2011

The rise in food prices thus impacted on the peoples basic need for living, mealie meal and cooking oil were the most expensive food substances found on the market followed by the cost of transport which was also on the rise.

A call by the reserve bank of Zimbabwe in its mid-term monetary policy in 2006 to remove the zeros in the Zimbabwean currency was in an effort to reduce the rising food prices. The CCZ then conducted a snap survey of prices in the supermarkets and they discovered that some shops had increased the food prices with the removal of the zeros (CCZ, 2006). An increase in prices could only be accepted if it was due to the cost of production not due to the fact that people felt the need to maximise profits (CCZ, 2006).

In 2006 flour was unavailable on the market this made those people that were able to find it on the market get exposed to exorbitant prices. According to the CCZ (2006) gazetting of the National Incomes and Pricing Commission Bill was a move that paved way for the much anticipated National Incomes and Pricing Commission and resultantly the protection of consumers with regards to pricing of goods and services and income related issues.

“The timeous setting and gazetting of prices is vital to ensuring sustainable access to basic commodities for all consumers, and therefore CCZ urges the relevant authorities to continue expediting the process of setting up the commission as it will be the only body which will effectively address the woes of many consumers and help maintain a balance where prices and incomes are concerned,” (CCZ, 2006).

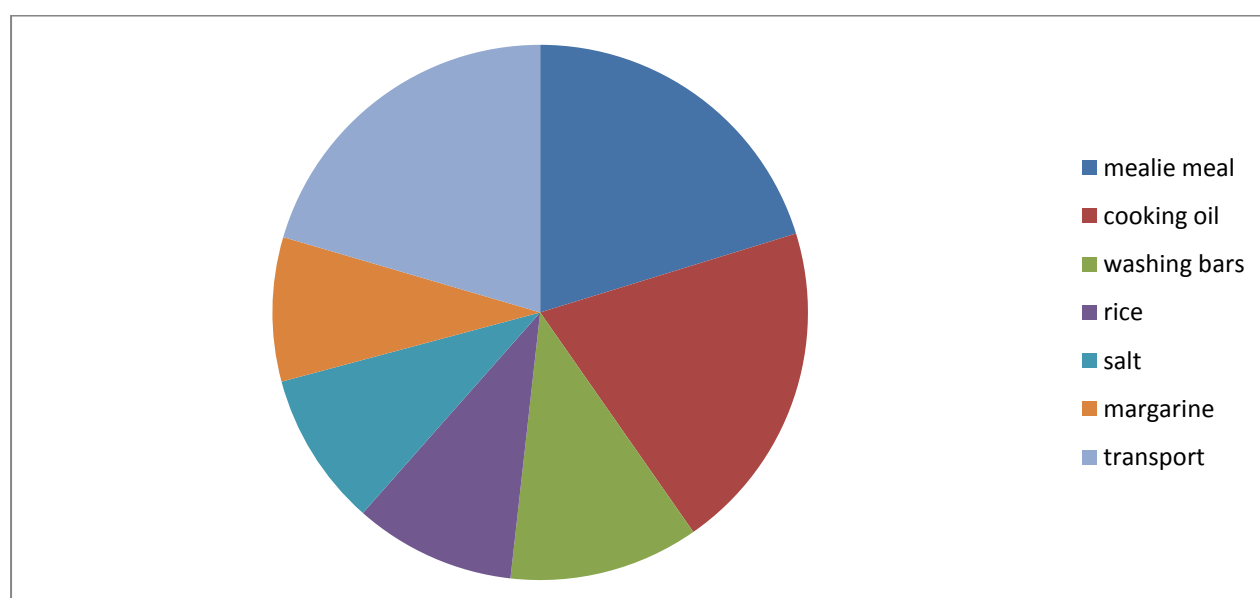
Rise in inflation caused the Zimbabwean dollar to go out of circulation due to the way that the goods and services were priced on the market. According to Kamidza (2009), the drying up of foreign investment and donor assistance coupled with severely limited export production capacities resulted in critical foreign currency shortages and parallel markets activities. In other words it gave rise to the black market which not only traded in illegal foreign currency exchanges but fuelled the cost of basic commodities on the market, thus shifting the structure of an economy already sinking. Some of the Mbare residents participated in money exchange as a coping strategy to the rise in food prices. The reserve bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) intervened in this illegal foreign currency exchange and allowed the use of foreign currencies as a medium of exchange. The loss of power of the Zimbabwean dollar on the money market, forced the government to come up with ways to deal with the long term policies which encompassed the official dollarisation. “Official dollarisation refers

to a country using a foreign currency as its official monetary base or legal tender,” (Kamidza, 2009).

“On 4 February 2008 the finance minister presented a United States dollar national budget thereby confirming the process of dollarisation in which citizens are allowed an extensive use of multiple currencies alongside the domestic currency. This wisdom is informed by the history of transitional economies such as Argentina (2002), Ecuador (2001), Ukraine and Kazakhstan (in the 1990’s), all of which adopted the two currency system (Hanke, 2008).

According to the CCZ (2006), after the dollarisation, the cost of living for a family of six during the month of September was US\$490.08 and this increased by 1% by October to US\$496.98. This is diagrammatically represented below:

Fig 1b: Year 2009, after dollarisation



Source: Author 2011

The dollarisation increased supplies on the market. Although supplies of most basic commodities had improved on both the parallel and formal markets, according to Fews Net (2009), the majority of market dependent households still can not afford to meet all their food

needs given their limited incomes and the extremely high prices which these commodities are trading. Price controls have failed to arrest price increases and protect poor people from the escalating prices, (Fews Net, 2009).

According to Mawere (2009) to rehabilitate the Zimbabwean economy from a past of control and ensuring the enhancement of both safety nets and social protection programs, the Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP) was created. This was mainly due to the political problems that were being faced by the country which included the deindustrialisation of the economy, high levels of poverty, sustained periods of negative GDP growth rates and the collapse of social services and food shortages. The vision of this program within Zimbabwe was to provide adequate and quality basic social services, social safety nets in both rural and urban areas as well as executing a comprehensive social protection program (Mawere, 2009). The STERP aimed to create a responsive efficient country which would maintain social development by using redistributive mechanisms and social rights, advance social protection and justice by building a strong economy through the use of market principles, establishing a participatory political demo through the new people driven constitution and rebuilding fundamental democratic institutions in Zimbabwe (Mawere, 2009).

2.2 FOOD INSECURITY IN ZIMBABWE

Rukuni & Jayne (1995) have notably addressed food insecurity in Zimbabwe on different levels which are political, economic and social. They argue that food insecurity is presented as both a land- hunger issue and a political economic issue.

Food insecurity can happen even in rural areas because it is more than just production but instead it is more concerned with who sells the food, who produces it and how it is redistributed therefore it is a question of availability, affordability and accessibility (Rukuni & Jayne, 1995). It is a question of whether all the individuals within a population are able to produce and retain enough food for their day to day sustenance. Sen (1981), basic entitlement approach makes a distinction between availability and access, particularly the exchange entitlements which notes a rise in food prices, a fall in wages or asset prices therefore individuals experience a decline in their terms of trade with the market for food.

The residents of Mbare are receiving low wages for those that are formally employed therefore cannot afford to purchase the high priced foods.

According to FOSENET (2004), household food availability was reported to fall in the month of September 2004. This was reported to be due to the harvest stocks from the previous season running out, without any corresponding increase in alternative food sources such as from the Grain Marketing Board or relief supplies. This was compounded by the rising prices of commercial foods (FOSENET, 2004).

Household food insecurity, is characterised by insufficient real income, this means that the impacts of the food prices will be group specific (Rukuni & Jayne, 1995). The two groups existing are the low income group (the poor), and the high income group (the income earning). The low income groups spend a large share of their income on food, these maybe small scale farmers who therefore buy more food than they sell economically they are called net buyers. In most households, higher food prices impacts directly on the quantity and the quality of food (Rukuni & Jayne, 1995). The less they earn, the less the quality and quantity and this is only made worse when the size of the family is put into consideration (Rukuni & Jayne, 1995). Most households in Mbare consumed on average 1 to 2 meals per day mainly starchy foods like potatoes and mealie-meal to keep them full for the greater part of the day.

“The main causes of household food insecurity in Zimbabwe are the unnecessarily high consumer prices for staple maize grain that erodes households real incomes, underdeveloped rural industries that prevent the diversification of income sources and exacerbate the effects of drought on household incomes, mothers level of education, which affects feeding practices, constraints to the diversification of cropping patterns into higher valued cash crops and poor sanitation in some areas,” (Rukuni & Jayne, 1995:1).

According to Rukuni & Jayne (1995) food insecurity at a national level, impacted on the nation through the cholera outbreak which claimed over 31000 deaths and infected 59000 people (Rukuni & Jayne, 1995). Malnutrition as a consequence of food insecurity, however targets the most vulnerable groups. Rukuni & Jayne (1995) explains that the social groups

most affected by malnutrition are those families that work on commercial farms, in resettlement areas, the households in communal areas as well as the low income urban dwellers. For the nation to understand the severity of the problem at hand malnutrition had to be measured,

“The nutritional status of children and adults can be measured in different ways. Weight for age is the main form of measurement used in Zimbabwe... weight-for-age data is available on a monthly basis in Zimbabwe and may be examined for seasonal variations that correspond to periods of low household food availability or high food prices. Height-for-age, or stunting, is a measure of chronically inadequate food intake. A stunted child is an individual who did not attain his or her full potential; not only in physical terms but in mental terms as well...they are more susceptible to illness and infection. Weight for height or wasting measures current nutritional status,” (Rukuni & Jayne, 1995:7)

Food security in Zimbabwe has been monitored since July 2002 by civil society organizations through the National NGO Food Security Network (FOSENET). The community Monitoring Programme is implemented through NGOs based within districts and through community-based monitors. Monthly reports from all areas of the country are compiled to provide a monthly situation assessment of food security and social welfare to enhance an ethical, effective and community focused response to social and economic challenges and to inform civil society-state interactions on social and economic developments (Community Monitoring Programme, 2004). The government cash for work was reported to have stopped in 16 districts, 28percent of districts, due to funding problems.

2.3 PUBLIC SAFETY NETS IN ZIMBABWE

Safety net programs in development policies play particular roles which include, impacting on the poverty levels and managing risk through the redistribution of income to those that are poor and vulnerable, improving their household coping strategies to the problems that they are faced with (Pambuzuka, 2008). And because these developmental policies are usually

politically involved, the government can make choices that support the efficiency and growth of the safety nets.

Social safety nets address the issue of socio economic problems within a country (Pambuzuka, 2008). They are used as a strategy to prevent extreme poverty levels and risks to the vulnerable, poor, those that have a limited access to income, and those that live within and below the poverty datum line (Pambuzuka, 2008). By targeting such people, when the income earning individuals or the country's economy faces hard times and they are pushed over the edge they are able to have something to sustain themselves. Therefore it targets the eligible and processes the impacts of the socio economic problems by carefully monitoring, updating and evaluating its own performance through the services provided by either the public sector, which is the government or the private sectors which are the nongovernmental organizations (Pambuzuka, 2008). Safety nets in low income countries particularly Zimbabwe in this context, are an effective tool which is used to reach out to those that are most vulnerable (Pambuzuka, 2008). For the Mbare residents who are poor, these social safety nets would have proved to be helpful had they targeted the majority of the residents.

Safety nets such as food aid programs and price subsidiaries have sub divisions depending on whom they are targeting. According to Arribas-Banos & Baldeon (2007), social safety nets can be provided in many forms which are, cash transfers, conditional cash transfers, food based programs, general subsidies, public works, fee waivers, exemptions and scholarships. Cash transfers and conditional cash transfers are both assistance in the form of cash to those who are poor or are at risk of falling into poverty but the only difference is that those that receive conditional cash transfers are supposed to meet a certain behavioural requirement which is usually related to children's health care and education (Arribas-Banos & Baldeon, 2007). Fee waivers, exemptions and scholarships provide poor people with financial resources to use public services which include education and health facilities (Arribas-Banos & Baldeon, 2007). The food aid based programs support adequate consumption and contributes to improving nutrition and securing livelihoods (Arribas-Banos & Baldeon, 2007). They are tied to the provision of food; either directly or through cash like instruments

for example food stamps or coupons that may be used to purchase food (Arribas-Banos & Baldeon, 2007).

It is important for Zimbabwe to come up with long term approaches to alleviate food insecurity which focus on its root causes. Safety nets can either be a short term approach or they can be institutional. Zimbabwe has the most serious humanitarian crisis due to the extent of the economic breakdown and the other sectors that hold the country together. This humanitarian crisis is brought about through the non-availability of medical services, food and water (Pambuzuka, 2008). The Zimbabwean government implemented social security nets which encompassed the supplementary feeding strategies, the government drought relief programs and the nutritional relief programs (Pambuzuka, 2008). Basic Education Assistance module, BEAM is a social safety net catering to the payment of school fees for disadvantaged children (Pambuzuka, 2008).

The most popular types of food aid programs in the context of Zimbabwe are the supplementary feeding programs, food for work, public assistance and the school feeding programs, (Pambuzuka, 2008). The supplementary feeding programs directly targets households or individuals. The food can be prepared and eaten for example at schools or at feeding centres or they can be given to people to take home with (Pambuzuka, 2008). The school feeding programs are particularly concerned with the health and nutrition of children, how it impacts on their education and thus are solely aimed at improving the child's ability to pay attention in class and improve their nutrition and health standards (Pambuzuka, 2008).

The government disbursed Z\$857 million in forms of social relief for those that are greatly affected (FEWS NET, 2003). This is the first portion of the 12.5 billion it has allocated for food relief, to rural and urban councils intended for the eight provinces of the county (FEWS NET, 2003). The food relief program was intended to cover the needs of around 3.1 million people (FEWS NET, 2003). Those people who are able bodied persons were expected to participate in this public works program for which they will be paid a relief allowance of Z\$10,000 monthly (FEWS NET, 2003). There are certain groups of people that were not expected to work for the money and these included the elderly, chronically ill, disabled people and child headed families (FEWS NET, 2003). Only one member per household was

eligible to participate, however the cash payment per month was not enough to purchase around a month's supply of maize grain for an average sized household at the parallel market maize prices currently prevailing in the traditional grain surplus districts (FEWS NET, 2003). Taking into consideration that an average household in Mbare had an average of 3 to 8 people per household, having one member participate in the food relief program was still not adequate to sustain a household.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology is a plan or a design of finding a solution to the research problem (Grinnel, 1993). Methodology does not only refer to more than a simple set of methods, rather it refers to the rationale, detailed description and the philosophical assumptions that underlie a particular study (Grinnel, 1993). This research uses a qualitative approach and qualitative techniques in the form of surveys using questionnaires and in-depth interviews in an attempt to attain an in-depth understanding of the data collected. This approach is suitable for this case study because it focuses on naturally occurring ordinary events in a natural setting. It is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:17). McMillan & Schumacher (1993:14) points out that it presents a narrative of facts with words, and is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants' perspective. This occurs through the researchers' participation in the life of those acting in a research role or through historical empathy with participants in past social events.

Nachmias & Nachmias (1996:28) state that a qualitative approach helps us to understand behaviour by getting to know the person's involved and their values, rituals, symbols, beliefs and emotions. Qualitative research affords the researcher the opportunity to acquire descriptive stories from the study, thus studies are framed by descriptions and meanings, definitions and interpretations of both the researcher and the participant (Babbie, 1993). The researcher can also get rich information about the social world, to study the natural environment and to make sense of phenomena in terms of meaning (Babbie, 1993). It also enables us to obtain data that is rich and holistic, revealing complexity by "thick depiction" that are vivid nested in a real context and have a circle of truth and also enables us to locate the meanings people give to the events, processes and structures of their lives and their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments and presuppositions (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).

However the qualitative approach has some weaknesses. Johnson (1982) argues that qualitative research might have lower credibility with some administrators and commissioners of programmes. Data analysis is often time consuming and the results are more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006). Despite these weaknesses, the qualitative approach enables us to understand a specific situation because of its emphasis on a specific case in its context, and environmental influence.

3.1 DATA COLLECTION

3.1.1 OBSERVATION

The case study for the research is Mbare, a high density suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe. The overall justification for choosing an urban setting like Mbare is because it is diverse and is seen as an important distinction where we have different types of people residing there, encompassing the low income earning, average income earning and poor. What can be learnt from the case of Mbare High density suburb can be generalized and applied to other communities.

Direct methods of observing people in the community of Mbare were used. The data was collected over a period of one month with a sample size of 20 people. To aid observation, photographs of different household coping strategies and scenes of Mbare were taken. These photographs show how a diverse and dynamic population responds to the effects of increasing food prices with reference to food availability and or insecurity. The researcher designed and issued out two questionnaires, to be completed by an individual in a household scenario. Annexure 1 and 2 show samples of guiding questions asked during conducting the semi-structured interviews.

Interviews with different households were conducted, with both the head of the household and other income earners within a household. The respondents were chosen by random sampling. Respondents were extruded from the following household types: -

- i. Family with both parents and children,
- ii. Single parent headed homes,
- iii. Grandparent headed homes.

3.1.2 RANDOM SAMPLING

There are two extensive types of sampling, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is one which each person in the population has an equal or at least a chance of being selected while with a non probability sample some have a greater but unknown chance than others of selection (De Vaus, 1996). Probability sampling method is any method of sampling that utilizes a form of random selection (Dooley, 1995). Probability samples are more preferable because they are more likely to produce representative samples and enable estimates of the samples accuracy (De Vaus, 1996).

Random samples fall under probability sampling. It refers to the process of picking a subset of people from a larger group or population (Dooley, 1995). Random selection is the surest way of providing an equal probability of selection. Dooley (1995) states that it is the best way of achieving probability sampling because the characteristics of most randomly selected samples are close to those of the population. Random sampling is made up of simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, probability proportional to size sampling, multistage or cluster sampling. All the types of random sampling have two things in common, each element has a known nonzero probability of being sampled and they involve random selection at some point (Dooley, 1995). This research uses simple random sampling.

3.1.3 SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLING

Simple random sampling was used so that all samples of the same size have an equal chance of being selected from the population. De Vaus (1996) points out that with simple random

sampling, members of a population are selected independent of one another and without replacement. Simple random sampling is more appropriate when the population is geographically concentrated (Dooley, 1995).

The advantages of using simple random sampling is because, “it is a self-weighting sample and one in each every individual in the population of interest has an equal opportunity of being selected for the sample” (Schutt, 2006). Additional advantages to this type of sampling are that it is simple to accomplish, easy to explain to others, the costs are lower, data collection is faster, it ensures homogeneity and it improves the quality of the data found, (Schutt, 2006). The disadvantages are that the whole population is not surveyed because of its cost implications and that the population is so dynamic meaning it may change over time; it is also more prone to sampling error as it may over represent one sex over the other (Schutt, 2006).

According to Schutt (2006), since the goal in sampling is to produce a representative sample and a perfect representative would be a minor image of the population from which it was selected; this research used simple random sampling. Participants were randomly selected at the Mbare musika market place and at randomly selected households in Vito Street to get willing interviewees who made the research process a success. The participant was then given a copy of the questionnaire to complete with the researcher standing by to attend to any queries that they might have or fill in for them especially for those that were not able to read properly. The same procedure was undertaken where households were randomly selected.

3.1.4 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection amongst participants who were randomly selected. Semi-structured interviews allow respondents to provide free responses in their own words, or, in some cases, choose from specified response categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993).

The semi-structured interview has an advantage of being reasonably objective and it allows for individual responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:251). Borg and Gall (1989:425) say that “the semi-structured interview permits a more thorough understanding of the respondent’s opinions, and is a rich source of data”. Robson (1993:231) points out that “there is the advantage on the part of the interviewer, of being able to modify the order of the question based upon the context of the conversation, change the wording of questions, give explanations, leave out particular questions that may seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee and include additional questions”.

Some of the limitations of semi-structured interviews are that, the interviewer may give out unconscious signal cues that guide the respondent to give answers expected by the interviewer (Robson 1993:232). Despite these limitations, this study used semi structured interviews because they assisted the researcher to get the opinions of the respondents, so as to acquire rich sources of data.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to supplement the questionnaire data and to enable the researcher to gauge the participants’ deeper feelings about the rising food prices. Interviews are effective because they give participants an opportunity to voice deeper opinions and feelings towards the issues in the research questions. The process of interviewing was a very tiring event as all the questions had to be answered during the small allocated time per day.

3.2 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Some dwellers were not comfortable with answering some of the questions as they felt that their private life was being ventured into. Some of the respondents were not necessarily the head of the households but earned some form of income which assisted within the household. Some residents refused to participate as they feared that it was a political gesture in connection to the supposedly upcoming elections. However the few interviews which were carried out will yield what can be considered to be a representative sample of the impacts of rising food prices on a community.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings based on data that was collected from residents of Mbare. In general, the study found that Mbare's population demographics consists of low income earning households (those who can afford 2 meals per day) the higher earning households (those that are still able to afford at least 3 meals per day) and the poor (those who are struggling to acquire even a meal per day). The average household consisted of between 3 to 8 people and a smaller percentage has formal jobs. The greater percentage of the respondents have informal jobs such as street vending and hoarding for resale for a much higher profit, the rest do not have any form of job whatsoever and survive on agricultural produce they get from their small pieces of land that they farm in nearby areas. The age group that mostly participated in the study is of productive age between 21 to 35 years. The youngest married female respondent was 17 years and the oldest was a male widowed respondent of 60 years of age. The respondents have low levels of education and few of them reached tertiary education levels. In terms of marital status, 10 of the respondents are married, 7 of the respondents are single, 2 divorced and 1 widowed. From these findings the researcher discovered that the rising food prices are a source of the growing inequality amongst the people of Zimbabwe. Further broader analysis of the data acquired during the field investigations follows in the discussion.

4.1 FOOD CONSUMPTION PATTERNS IN MBARE

Poor households were the ones that were hardest hit by soaring food prices since they had a few coping mechanisms at their disposal. For these households, higher prices had an immediate impact on the quantity and quality of food consumed. They had to reduce the number of meals, the size of meals and reduce expenditures on non-staple foods. These strategies had significant consequences, especially for the most vulnerable groups (sick, elderly, children and pregnant women) as they were not receiving a balanced diet. As one of the respondents put it:

“In my case the children are in government institutions that are facing difficulties themselves. Some of the chronically ill people I know do not have jobs which make it difficult to trace how they get their food.” (Trevor Makanyonga, 48 years)

Age is a factor related to food consumption which contributes to food insecurity within a household. One head of the household is below 20 years of age, 11 between the ages of 20 and 30, 6 are between 31 and 45 and 2 are above the age of 45 years. Food insecurity is seen to increase within a household with an older head of house by the consumption of 1 meal per day. This shows that elderly headed households were the most vulnerable to food insecurity which may have been due to their inability to go outside and acquire food the way that the younger people were doing it for example through cross border trading. An indication of at least 1 member of a household headed by a person between 20 to 30 years of age is formal employment or earnings in some sort of income either monetary or food. According to one of the respondents:

“We are no longer having adequate or decent meals. We have reduced them to 2 meals per day” (Wellington Mlotshwa, 48 years)

Out of the 20 households which participated, 3 households consumed one meal per day, all of which are female headed households with household sizes of 3, 6 and 9 people. The little food consumption levels within these households are mainly because they are larger and the head of the households are self employed with no consistent income.

Six households consumed 2 meals per day, 4 of these were male and 2 were female headed with a household size of between 3 to 8 people. All of the 6 households had a form of income coming in. In favour of the male headed households 2 of the households had 2 people bringing in an income and the other 2 had 1 member who got their income in the form of pension and the other household had 3 members receiving an income. For the 2 female headed households, 1 household had 2 people and the other had 1 person receiving an income. As one respondent put it:

“I am the only person in a household of 6 members who is earning an income in the form of pension which is only US\$45. This is not adequate, such that we had to eliminate some foods in our diet like meat and replaced with more vegetables that we grow in our garden.” (Peter Manyera, 60 years)

Eleven households consumed 3 meals per day, with 9 of them being male and only 2 being female households. Both of the female households had 4 people living within each household and they had at least 1 person receiving an income. The 9 male headed households had between 3 to 8 people residing per house with at least 1 to 3 people earning an income however only 7 of these 9 respondents were formally employed. The above results from the 3 different types of households show that those with more people who were formally employed had a higher chance of consuming three meals per day compared to those with an inconsistent form of income.

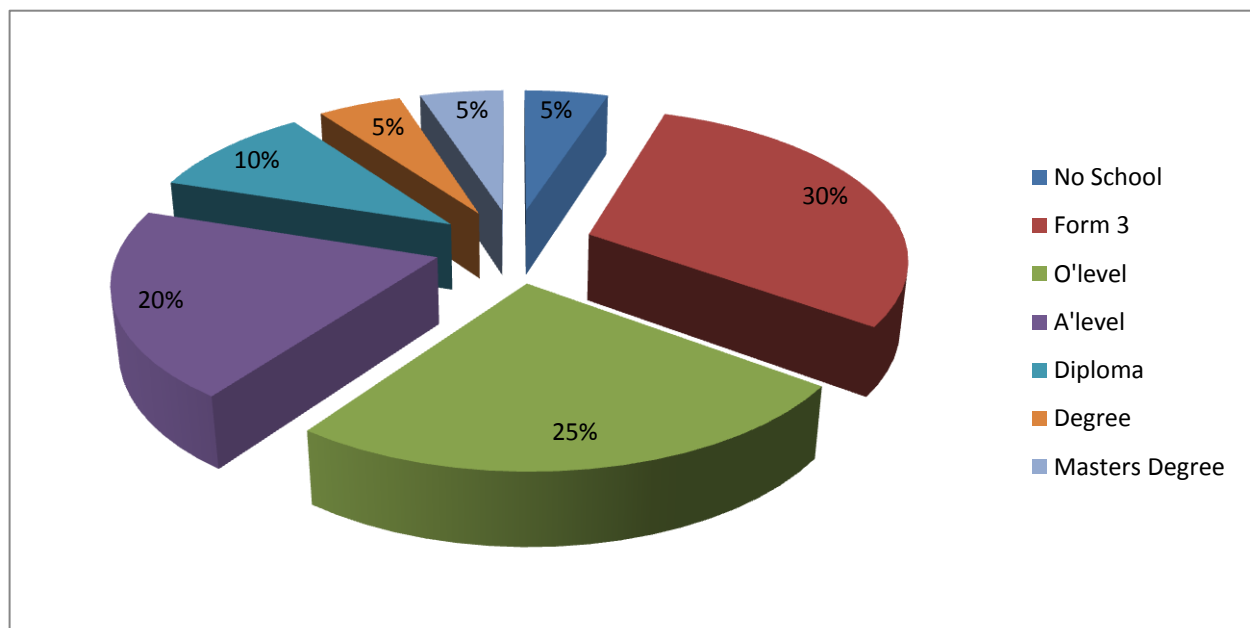
4.1.1 INCOME LEVELS AND THEIR IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

The significant impact of the rise in food prices for most of the respondents was mainly within the four years from 2007 to 2010. Most respondents were mainly affected during 2008 with a number of 15 respondents, the least affected year was 2007 with only 1 respondent confirming to that and 2 respondents each for 2009 and 2010. The impact of the rising food prices seems like a vicious cycle in the economy of Zimbabwe. According to Hanmer (1992), in 1993, households in Zimbabwe faced harsh economic circumstances due to inflation which raised the price of many basic food stuffs, employment prospects were poor and real wage levels were stagnant. In terms of gender within the 20 households of each participant, 4 women and 9 men are employed, 3 women and 4 men are unemployed. Despite the stagnant wage levels 9 households have at least 1 person who earns some sort of income and 5 people out of these 9 houses are the owners of the household. One female headed household has no one earning an income. Six of these households have 2 people earning an income and out of these 6, 3 of them are the household owners. Four households have 3 people earning an income and none of them are owners of the households, they are all single and between the ages of 21 and 25. This shows that there is no direct relationship between income earning and household ownership.

4.1.2 EDUCATION LEVELS AND THEIR IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

Mbare is a diverse community with a various number of people with different educational backgrounds. The figure below illustrates these findings.

Fig 4a: Education qualifications of the respondents



Source: Author 2011

The highest percentage of the population reached Form 3 level and only 5% managed to reach tertiary education levels. This then impacts on their ability to acquire a job with a consistent income consequently most of the residents of Mbare will be pushed below the poverty line.

Having lower numbers of respondents' that reached high education levels can also be explained by the rise in food prices indirectly impacting on the access to basic education. According to one of the respondents, Maureen (Interviewed December 2010):

"I have four children that I am taking care of who have stopped going to school as I have to choose between sending them to school and having a meal. I was hoping that

after the dollarisation, our lifestyle quality will change but I still cannot afford to buy a loaf of bread which is US\$1.”

Not going to school for most of the kids is a possible risk to the development of the country, as empowering the youth assures economic growth of a nation.

The impacts of the rising food prices on the residents of Mbare, was caused by the non-availability of the products on the market due to the lack of foreign currency by the government to import, the earnings of the individuals as most people were not receiving a substantial salary that could be able to purchase the foods when they were available on the market. Due to these low salaries, most of the people lost their jobs or resorted to resigning. As one respondent put it:

“In the year 2008, food stuffs were not available on the market and if any, they were very expensive.” (Bernard Samakomva, 44 years)

4.1.3 HOUSEHOLD SIZES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON FOOD SECURITY

An average of 3 to 8 people resided within one household. Of those 20 households that were interviewed, 14 of them had children between 0 and 10 years of age, 15 households had age groups between 11 and 30 years, those between 30 and 45 years of age were in 12 households and in 7 households resided those above 45 years of age.

An increase in household members also impacted on a households ability to meet its food needs due to the increase in prices. Rural to urban migration was what in effect increased the number of people living within one household. Most households in urban areas have often had to absorb members of their extended family and sometimes looked after one or more children from the rural areas whose parents were having difficulties in feeding them. As one of the respondents put it:

“An extension of the family has impacted on my ability to meet the food needs of my household as I have more people I am taking care of” (Stuart Moyo, 25 years).

The size of the household directly impacts on food security within that household. The largest household had 8 members and it is more vulnerable to food insecurity compared to those with fewer members as there are less people to feed. The larger households have at most two meals per day whereas within a household of 4 members or less having three balanced meals per day.

4.1.4 MARITAL STATUS AND ITS IMPACTS ON FOOD SECURITY

Marital status had a vital responsibility within most of the households in terms of consumption. Eleven of the respondents are either single (both female and male), divorced and widowed. These constitute the most vulnerable food insecure group compared to the married group households of 9 respondents. However it is evident that single headed households are more prone to food insecurity compared to households headed by married people because most do not have any household ownership and with the married households at least two people have a steady form of income.

Most households were consuming carbohydrates followed by vegetables and very little protein rich foods and oils. Further analysis of the diets indicated that the respondents were obtaining most of their calories from maize followed by potatoes and pot bread ‘chimodho’. As one of the respondents put it:

“We eliminated milk, eggs and meat from our diet and incorporated homemade bread, chimodho, potatoes, vegetables and mealie meal porridge in the morning.”
(Edina, 38 years)

4.2 COPING STRATEGIES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Most of the above households had to implement coping strategies of acquiring food without being on a formal job. For those that are formally employed, consuming 1 to 2 meals per day will affect both their physical and mental capacity to perform thus reducing the growth of a company which will indirectly impact on the development of the country.

Importing from other neighbouring countries like South Africa, Botswana, was on the rise during 2008, through cross border trading. More and more people were money driven therefore there were no fixed prices of the commodities they were selling, the main goal was to maximise profits. Four people resorted to cross boarder trading with 3 of these being male and 1 female of productive age between 21 to 29 years. As one of the respondents put it:

“To cope with the rise in food prices in the past three years, we started purchasing some of our food from neighbouring countries mainly Botswana and South Africa.”
(Trust Mangoma, 24 years).

Households had to reduce expenditures on other basic needs and investments especially intangible human assets, such as education and health, or sell productive assets those that are tangible. This would however bring up negative effects on their current and future livelihoods. As two of the respondents put it:

“I had to give up some of the social lifestyle activities like visiting relatives so as to reduce expenditures. I also stopped buying clothes for Christmas for my 2 children.”(Elizabeth, 38 years).

“Rise in costs of food has resulted in shortfalls on other household plans.”
(Anozivashe Shumba, 25 years).

Two people sold their property as a coping strategy to the rise in food prices, both male and female of 20 and 37 years of age respectively. As one of the respondents put it:

“We had to sell our property so as to buy food” (Memory Murindi, 37years)

Most of the residents in Mbare assist each other by sharing ideas on new forms of trade, and how to acquire foods that can sustain them for a while. Gender constraints showed those households that are headed by females to be slightly food insecure compared to those headed by men by 9 people compared to the 11 for male headed households. The reason for this was that the majority of females were not formally employed therefore not receiving a steady income. From this we acquire that 3 people resorted to vending with 2 people being female and 1 male of 17, 30 and 60 years of age respectively. Their major source of income is from the cash crops that they produce and petty trading. Hoarding of commodities in anticipation

of an increase in prices or non availability of the product on the market was also on the rise. This was essentially panic buying.

Due to the low salaries that most of the Mbare residents were receiving, other forms of coping with the rise in food prices were employed. According to one of the respondents:

“We were getting low salaries and some members of the family that used to support decided to quit work due to these low salaries which were not assisting us in any way as it was all being used as transport fare.” (Jacob Burundi, 29 years).

The same respondent resorted to foreign currency exchange dealing as a coping strategy to the rise in food prices. Two people, both male and female of 29 and 25 years of age respectively found themselves in this predicament which however was able to sustain and meet their food needs.

Focusing on household livelihood strategies to cope with food price increases permits us to identify those agricultural producers within the urban areas that are most likely to benefit from the price increases. Households that specialize in urban agriculture derive more than 75% of their income and food from farming (Hanmer, 1992). As a coping strategy to the fuelling food prices, most of the residents resorted to urban agriculture, planting mostly maize and vegetables and as well climatic conditions in the urban areas proved to be favourable for them to have good harvests. Below in Fig 4b and 4c are pictures of urban agriculture practiced in Mbare.

Fig 4b Urban Agriculture in Mbare



Source: Author 2011

Fig 4c: Urban Agriculture in Mbare



Source: Author 2011

Urban agriculture is the main coping strategy in this area with 11 people out of the 20 interviewed practising it. Seven of the 11 people who practise urban agriculture are male and 4 are female between 17 and 60 years of age. More males practised urban agriculture as compared to women as the women were more into petty trading and vending. On the other hand inadequate inputs for agriculture production affect the food consumption levels of the residents of Mbare and the ability to practice urban agriculture extensively. The size of the piece of land is also a contributory factor and to a greater part agricultural produce is sometimes stolen whilst still in the fields or destroyed by municipality as most of the land is not legally allocated. As one of the respondents put it:

“Apart from being employed, I am into peace jobs, poultry production and practise urban agriculture, planting maize mainly.” (Johnson Maswaya, 29 years).

To cope with the rise in food prices, 10 of the respondents confirmed to borrowing money to buy food or they substituted maize by less preferred foods, or reduced the number and quantity of meals they ate per day. Nine of the other respondents improvised by switching expenditures on health, education, transport, water and electricity, changing dietary habits, and cutting back on purchases of non-essential goods for food spending. Only 1 of the respondents reported to selling assets and goods for money to buy food. As one of the respondents put it:

“It is not easy and we usually seek assistance from relatives in the Diaspora. They send money for the food stuffs.” (Trust Mangoma, 24 years).

Fig 4d shows a Mbare family during the week with three children of school going age who have stopped going to school.

Fig 4d Mbare family



Source: Author 2011

Although there are many NGO's and safety nets placed by the Zimbabwean government and private sectors, like the public assistance, food for work, child supplementary (Pambuzuka, 2008) only 2 of the respondents confirmed to receiving any form of assistance, from BEAM and Christian Care (churches within the community). As two respondents put it:

"I receive education assistance from BEAM." (Shebbah, 17 years).

"During 2008 when food prices were high we received assistance from Christian Care in the form of food and cash. We still do but not as much as before." (Memory Murindi, 37 years).

Due to only a few people receiving assistance most of them are left to fend for themselves and meet their own food needs.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion the rise of food prices impacted on the residents of Mbare as most have big households with an average of 3 to 8 people. The size of the household affected the households' food consumption. The researcher found out that the bigger the size of the household, the fewer the number of meals that were consumed within that household. The low levels of education of most of the residents impacted on their food insecurity as less people were formally employed with a household having on average 2 or none of the members employed. A household with more people earning some form of income has a higher chance of consuming at least three meals per day. Nonetheless the greater percentage has informal jobs and their main source of acquiring food that they need for their daily sustenance is mainly through urban agriculture, followed by vending and hoarding to resale.

Most of the respondents did not receive any form of assistance from the government or the NGO's although there were many safety nets put in place to assist those that needed any form of assistance. Respondents were however looking forward to getting some sort of assistance in the future.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is on the conclusion and the recommendations which are based on the data collected and analysed. This research sought to examine the impacts of rising food prices in Mbare, Harare. It was guided by three research questions:

1. How has the rising food prices impacted on the urban working class and poor in Mbare?
2. What are the coping strategies that the urban poor have employed?
3. What has the Zimbabwean government done to address the issue of rising food prices?

The study found that the negative effects that the escalating and high food prices had on the residents of Mbare seemed to impact all households despite the number of individuals within a household. The marital status of the majority of the respondents revealed that those who are married are more likely to provide with a food secure household. However most of the respondents who participated in the research were seeking for assistance in the form of food provision or education loans or scholarships as they are not able to fend for themselves and their families especially those households with children of school going age. Most of the respondents resorted to urban agriculture as a form of coping and survival and some of the households managed to sell their produce or trade for other things that they did not have which they required for survival. The message that is clearly outlined by the research is that most of the households are poor and have the least means to cope. They are negatively affected by an increase in the price of basic staple (maize) food commodities.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The effects and impacts of the rising food prices vary extremely within communities. With that alone the governments' policy structure for reducing poverty and the development of

agriculture should focus on protecting the most vulnerable households in urban areas, by strengthening and expanding their social protection systems and safety nets. This can only be achieved through:

- Involving the community members and having a representative for each targeted community
- Continuous assessment, analysis and monitoring of the systems put in place.

By so doing, this will address the food security problem, and seek to find the most affected in the communities in which they reside in and the most appropriate response that they can assist them with. The policy structure of poverty reduction and development should look into providing those in the urban areas with key resources such as fertilizers, pesticides and seeds which are needed to turn farming into a profitable activity. It is without doubt that many households practice urban agriculture which contributes tremendously to household food security. However the forecast of urban agriculture is of providing for their own households such that with its significant contribution, it should be promoted. Land is in adequate quantity with only the setback that it has to be approved by the municipality for them to use particular areas.

As discussed in Chapter 4, poor households are tremendously found to be the net food buyers of food. However there are exceptions as some other poor households are able to gain from the increase in prices. Due to this reason,

- The food markets should be monitored closely in relation to price and its impacts on food insecurity such that prices are controlled.
- An increase in supply of food on the market and encouraging competition amongst suppliers can be a way of lowering the prices of the basic commodities on the market.

Informal employment which include petty trading and cross border are also activities that contribute to income sources of most households, therefore by putting policies and programs in place which bind the growth potential of the informal sector should be promoted.

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1

Questionnaire for community members

HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Age of the respondent
2. Gender
3. Marital status
4. Education qualification
5. Total number of people in the household
6. How many people within the household fall in the following categories?

Age	Number	Male	Female
0- 10yrs			
11-20yrs			
21-30yrs			
30-45yrs			
45+ yrs			

7. Are you currently employed?
8. How many people currently employed within the household fall within the following categories:

Age	Number	Male	Female
10-20yrs			

21-30yrs			
30-45yrs			
45+yrs			

ANNEXURE 2

Interview Guide for Community members

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

NAME :

AGE :

GENDER :

MARITAL STATUS :

EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS :

SIZE OF THE HOUSEHOLD :

FOOD ACCESS

- i. WHAT ARE THE MAIN SOURCES OF FOOD WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD?

- ii. HOW DO YOU ACQUIRE THESE FOOD STUFFS?

- iii. HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES BRINGING FOOD INTO THE HOUSEHOLD?

MEALS PER DAY

- i. HOW MANY MEALS PER DAY DO YOU CONSUME?

- ii. HAS THE RISING FOOD PRICES IMPACTED ON YOUR DAILY FOOD CONSUMPTION?

- iii. WHAT FOOD SUBSTANCES HAVE YOU HAD TO INCOOPERATE OR ELIMINATE WITHIN YOUR DIET?

RISING FOOD PRICES

- i. HOW HAS THE RISING FOOD PRICES IMPACTED ON THE HOUSEHOLD?

- ii. WHAT DIFFICULTIES HAVE NEGATIVELY IMPACTED ON YOUR HOUSEHOLDS ABILITY TO MEET YOUR FOOD NEEDS?

- iii. HOW MANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS EARN AN INCOME FOR THE HOUSEHOLD?

- iv. IN WHICH YEAR WAS THE HOUSEHOLD MOST IMPACTED ON THE MOST BY THE RISE IN FOOD PRICES AND HOW?

COPING STRATEGIES

- i. WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE YOU EMPLOYED IN COPING WITH THE RISE IN FOOD PRICES IN THE PAST THREE YEARS?

- ii. HOW DO THE CHRONICALLY ILL COPE IN CASES OF FOOD SHORTAGES WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD?

- iii. WHAT KIND OF SOCIAL LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU HAD TO GIVE UP?

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

- i. IS THE HOUSEHOLD GETTING ANY SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE THE HOUSEHOLD AND IN WHAT FORM?

- ii. DOES THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT ANYONE LIVING OUTSIDE, WITH ANY FORM OF FOOD OR CASH?

iii. ARE THERE ANY ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE ASSISTING YOUR
HOUSEHOLD WITH ANY FORM OF ASSISTANCE AND HOW OFTEN?

ANNEXURE 3

Table 1: Respondents Household Demographic Characteristics

	H 1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6
Age	48	21	30	60	24	44
Sex	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male
Education Qualification	O'level	A' level	Form 3	O'level	Degree	Msc
Marital Status	Widow	Married	Married	Married	Single	Divorced
Size of Household	6	7	3	6	6	3
No of income Earners	2	3	1	1	3	1

	H 7	H8	H9	H10	H11	H12
Age	43	24	20	25	33	22
Sex	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male
Education Qualification	Degree	Diploma	Diploma	A 'Level	Diploma	O'level
Marital Status	Married	Single	Single	Single	Married	Married
Size of	7	6	8	3	5	5

Household						
No of income Earners	1	3	2	1	2	2

	H 13	H14	H15	H16	H17	H18
Age	37	25	29	20	38	25
Sex	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female
Education Qualification	O'level	Diploma	Diploma	A' level	A' level	O'level
Marital Status	Divorced	Single	Single	Single	Married	Married
Size of Household	4	8	8	4	6	4
No of income Earners	1	3	2	1	1	2

	H 19	H20
Age	17	21
Sex	Female	Female
Education Qualification	Form 3	None
Marital	Married	Married

Status		
Size of Household	3	9
No of income Earners	1	0

A'level - Advanced Level

O'level - Ordinary Level

Msc- Masters in Science (Nursing)

ANNEXURE 4

Pictures of areas in Mbare



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