

Abstract:

Literature has conceptualized the relationship between population growth and food self-sufficiency at two different levels. One school of thought assumes that once population growth outstrips food production, an agricultural crisis will ensue. On the other hand, it is anticipated that population growth is likely to stimulate agricultural production and in particular, food production. This study hypothesized that population growth was a major driving force behind land use, and this process in turn influenced food self-sufficiency at the household level. Study findings however show that this relationship was mediated by several factors. Nevertheless, such patterns do impact on food output and, subsequently, the ability to be food self-sufficient. Households with a high dependency ratio tended to devote less land to food production. In cases where land resources were limited, cash crop farming competed with food crop production but, off-farm incomes enhanced food production. And, whenever land resources were plenty, acreage under cultivation was no longer a function of population parameters. This study, therefore, recommends a greater synchronization between agricultural policies and rural development. It is assumed that where physical infrastructure is in place, agricultural production and fertility behaviour will respond accordingly, both simultaneously and in isolation