

OVERVIEW OF GLSS4

Background

Despite the successes of the structural adjustment programme being implemented by the Government to strengthen and rehabilitate the economy of Ghana, there are high social costs. The monitoring and evaluation of these costs on sub-groups of the population are therefore essential for planning suitable compensatory programmes for those adversely affected. This implies that the necessary data must be available for such purposes.

Since the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) is an extensive survey and detailed in its coverage of various topics, it serves as a good basis for in-depth analysis of living standards in the country and lends itself to the monitoring, evaluation and analysis of poverty in its various ramifications

Poverty alleviation has been identified as a focal point of government policy and programmes. In addition to poverty alleviation is the issue of labour information systems particularly on employment, underemployment and unemployment on continuous basis consequent on the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) launched as a component of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP). The emergence of vulnerable groups as a result of the implementation of SAP calls for a clearer identification and composition of these groups, and monitoring of their performance over a period of time.

Existing surveys on employment and earnings do not allow the generation of comprehensive labour market statistics (including trends in unemployment, the number of people looking for work, and the number of self-employed workers) that could provide a monthly or annual snapshot of the activities of the country's population of working age. Policy-makers, business persons, and academic analysts need more expanded information for purposes such as evaluating living standards and conditions of work and the labour force, especially that engaged in the informal sector of the economy. Hence, the need for a fourth round of the GLSS with a labour force module.

Objectives Of The Survey

The survey has the following objectives:

- * To provide information on patterns of households consumption and expenditure at a greater level of disaggregation.
- * In combination with earlier data from the GLSS to give a data base for national and regional planning and for the estimation of consumption as a proportion of household production.
- * To give an in-depth enquiry into the structure and distribution of wages and conditions of work of the country's labour force
- * To provide comprehensive benchmark data for use in the compilation of current statistics on average earnings, hours of work, and time rates of wages and salaries so as to indicate wage/salary differentials between branches of industry, geographic regions, occupations and the sexes.

To achieve these objectives, in-depth data was collected on the following key elements:

- * Demographic Characteristics.
- * Health and Fertility Behaviour.

- * Education and Skills / Training.
- * Employment and Time Use.
- * Housing and Housing Conditions.
- * Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure.

Also are statistics on:

- i) Establishments by size and type of labour employed;
- ii) Educational background and skills of the labour force;
- iii) Time use, job characteristics, hours of work, activity status and employment search, employment history;
- iv) establishment practices with respect to wage/salary, payment schedules, shift operations, payments for overtime, incentive bonuses, and contributions to pension and social security schemes.

The information gathered from this survey would generally aid decision makers in the formulation of economic and social policies by,

- * identifying target groups for government assistance;
- * constructing models to stimulate the impact of the various policy options on individual groups;
- * analysing the impact of decisions that have already been implemented and of the economic situation on living conditions of households;

and

- * monitoring and evaluating employment policies and programmes, income-generating and maintenance schemes, vocational training and other similar programmes. The joint measurement of employment and income provides the basis for analysing the adequacy of employment of different categories of workers and the income-generating capacity of employment-related economic hardships.

Methodology Of The Survey

The study methodology proposed about 6,000 households in 300 EAs (195 rural and 105 urban) in order to achieve the survey objectives. This covers about 30,000 household members (based on 20 households per EA with an average household size of 5 persons). Each selected workload was visited a total of 7 times every 5 days. Specific portions of the questionnaire were then administered on each visit.

Sample Design

A two-stage sample was selected for the survey. At the first stage, 300 EAs were selected using systematic sampling with probability proportional to size method (PPS) where the size measure is the 1984 number of households in the EA. This was achieved by ordering the list of EAs with their sizes according to the strata. The size column was then cumulated, and with a random start and a fixed interval the sample EAs were selected. At the second stage, a fixed number of 20 households was systematically selected from each selected EA to give a total of 6,000 households. Additionally 5 households were selected as reserve to replace missing households.

Questionnaires

Three types of questionnaires were used for GLSS4: a household questionnaire, a community questionnaire and a price questionnaire.

The household questionnaire was in two parts. Part A collected information on household composition, education, health and fertility, employment and time use, migration, and housing characteristics, and it was also used to identify the respondents for Part B. Part B covered agricultural activities, including the consumption of home produce, household expenditure, non-farm enterprises, other income and expenditure, credit, assets, and savings.

Details of infrastructure and other facilities available to rural communities were recorded in the community questionnaire.

The price questionnaire was used to collect information on prices in the local market. This information is needed for comparing prices in different parts of the country, which would allow the construction of regional price indexes and the adjustment of household expenditures to a common base so as to take account of regional variations in purchasing power.

Field work

The survey was spread over a 12-months period (starting from 1st April 1998 to 25th March 1999) in order to ensure continuous recording of household consumption and expenditures and changes occurring thereof. The year was divided into 10 cycles of 36 days each. Interviews were conducted on the first 35 days of each cycle while the 36th day was used for traveling by the team to the next set of EAs. Eleven field teams each made up of 7 persons were involved in the data collection.

Data processing

Each data entry operator was assigned to one field team and stationed in the regional office of the GSS. The main data entry software used to capture the data was IMPS (Integrated Microcomputer Processing System). The data capture run concurrently as the data collection and lasted for 12 months. The IMPS data was read into SAS (Statistical Analysis System), after which the analysis and generation of the statistical tables were done using SAS.