

## **A Brief on the Findings of the UNHS 2005/06**

The demand for and use of data for evidence-based policy and decision making has extended beyond the confines of administrative boundaries to cover household activities and behaviour. Monitoring changes at household level through household surveys has, therefore, become more important now than ever before. The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) has been carrying out an integrated household survey, popularly known as Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) every other year since late 1980s. Thanks to UNHS, Uganda has very rich household time series data covering over 13 years. The data have been the main source of statistical information for monitoring poverty levels, trends and related welfare issues. The UNHS 2005/06 was undertaken from May 2005 to April 2006 and covered about 7,400 households scientifically selected countrywide. The survey was comprehensive and had five modules, namely; Socio-economic, Agriculture, Community, Market and Qualitative. A comprehensive report on UNHS 2005/06 has been released. The highlights of the findings are summarized below.

### **Population:**

The estimated population of Uganda in 2005/06 was 27.2 million with females constituting 51 percent of the total population. The population of Uganda was dominated by persons below 15 years. Since 1999/00, the number of households has been rising. From 4.2 million in 1999/00 they increased to 5.2 million in 2005/06. The Eastern region had the largest average household size of 5.6 compared with Central region with 4.8. The survey showed that the youth (18-30 yrs old) migrated more than any other group of the population.

### **Education:**

Net enrollment levels were reported to be about 84 percent during the last 5 years. Overall literacy rates are still low at 69 percent despite the existence of UPE. Many of the children in school going age failed to attend school at all because they were considered 'too young'. Other barriers like cost of education (uniform, scholastic materials, etc) are limiting universal access to primary education. Up to 20 percent of the population 15 years and above had no formal education.

### **Labour Force:**

The labour force grew at an annual rate of 3.6 percent with workers in rural areas accounting for most of the growth. Three quarters of the labour force had lower than secondary level education and were mainly employed in the agricultural sector though the earnings from the sector were five times less than the earnings in the public sector.

### **Health:**

Disease prevalence in Uganda increased from 29 percent to 40 percent between 2002/03 and 2005/6. Malaria was reported to be the dominant cause of sickness accounting for about 50 percent of the sicknesses reported. Majority of the people who fell sick sought medical attention from private clinics. Among those who fell sick but sought no medical care, illness being mild was the major reason. Other reasons were cost and long distances to the health facilities. Although the use of mosquito nets has increased over the years from 11 percent in 2002/03 to 17 percent in 2006, malaria still poses a major challenge to the health service delivery in Uganda.

### **Household Economic Activity:**

Half of the households in Uganda depended on subsistence farming as their major source of livelihood. Overall, 9 percent of the households took one meal a day although children aged less than 5 years took nothing for breakfast in 10 percent of the households.

### **Household Assets and Provisions**

Out of the total number of households, 39 percent owned a bicycle which serves as a means of transport. Fifteen percent of the households in Uganda had at least one of its members operating

a savings account with a formal institution. Nine in every 10 people had at least two sets of clothes and one in every two household members had at least a pair of shoes. The ownership of clothes and shoes did not register significant changes between 2002/03 and 2005/06.

### **Housing and Sanitation:**

More than half of the dwellings were detached while one out of every five households lived in huts. More than three quarters of households were found in owner-occupied dwelling units and a quarter of households stayed in rented dwelling units. Almost two thirds of dwellings had iron sheets as roofing material, one half were constructed with brick walls and over three quarters had earth floors. Two in every three households had access to safe drinking water in 2005/06 and this is similar to the 2002/03 finding. One in every ten households had no toilet facility, a slight improvement from 13 percent registered in 2002/03. Generally, the housing and sanitation indicators did not significantly change between 2002/03 and 2005/06.

One in every four households was headed by a female. Females spent more time in care labour than males and this was true in all regions. Care labour in this case refers to activities like looking after children and the sick, collecting firewood, fetching water and cooking.

### **Household shocks and Coping mechanisms:**

The survey results show that nearly two thirds of all households experienced at least one type of shock. The main shocks were drought, floods, death of family members, pest attacks, robbery and civil strife. Rural households suffered mostly from shocks related to agriculture. The median duration of the most serious shock lasted 4 months and use of savings ranked highest as a mitigation measure.

### **Vulnerability:**

Vulnerable persons comprise of orphans, widows, older persons (60+) and People With Disabilities (PWDs). Fifteen percent of children below 18 years were orphans while 18 percent of those aged 5-17 were engaged in child labour activities. The national disability rate was 7 percent, of which 20 percent had multiple disabilities. Over 40 percent of PWDs aged 6-24 attending school declared that they were affected all the time. For those PWDs aged 14 -64, 46 percent declared that they were affected with regard to participating in employment activities

### **Access to Services:**

Across all communities, the availability of education and health facilities, electricity services and access to safe drinking water has increased since 2001. The nearest Government Primary school was found in an average distance of 2 km while the nearest Government Hospital was on average 27 Km away and walking was the most common means of reaching these facilities.

### **Poverty Estimates:**

The UNHS 2005/06 data has been analyzed to estimate poverty statistics compared to those generated from earlier household surveys. These statistics are based on comparisons of household consumption per Adult Equivalent with the absolute poverty line of approximately "one dollar a day" used internationally. To evaluate poverty trends, attempts have been made to compare the results of the UNHS 2005/06 with the findings from UNHS 1992/93 and UNHS 2002/03 because these surveys covered all districts in Uganda. However, for comparison purposes, trends consistent with earlier analyses that exclude the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Kasese and Bundibugyo will be presented.

As in earlier analyses, a number of adjustments were made in the construction of the consumption aggregate to make it consistent with previous analysis. Findings show;

- An increasing trend in nominal consumption expenditure per capita from Shs 28,899 in 2002 to 39,829 in 2006

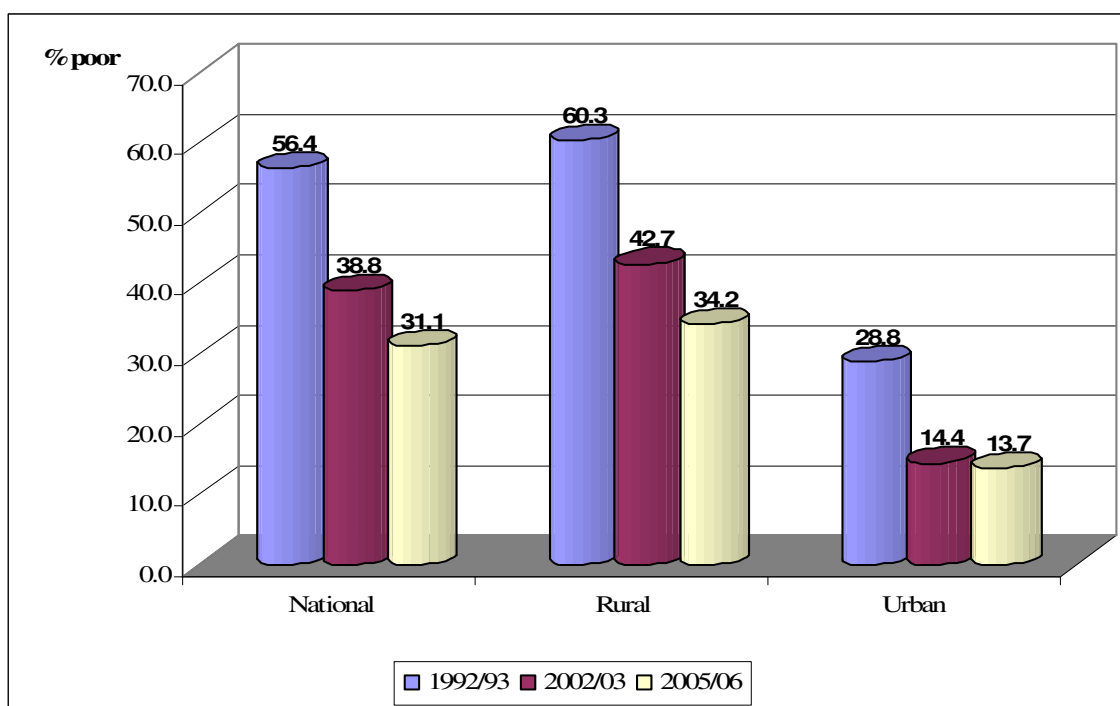
- That between UNHS(2002/03) and UNHS(2005/06), household expenditures increased by 33.2% but the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) changed by 24.4% between the surveys
- The increase in household expenditures was driven by rural areas (38.8%) compared to urban areas (13.8%)

In real terms, consumption increased from Ug Shs 35,736 in 2002 to Ushs 39,746 at national level. The corresponding figures for rural areas were Ushs 29,500 and UShs 33,900 respectively; and decreased for urban areas from Ushs 74,800 to Ushs 71,800 over the same period.

Overall, 31 percent of the population was estimated to be poor in 2005/06 (Figure 1). The decline in income poverty was highest in rural areas (8.5 percentage points) compared to urban areas (0.7 percentage points). It is the strong growth in consumption among the rural population that partly explains the significant reduction in poverty.

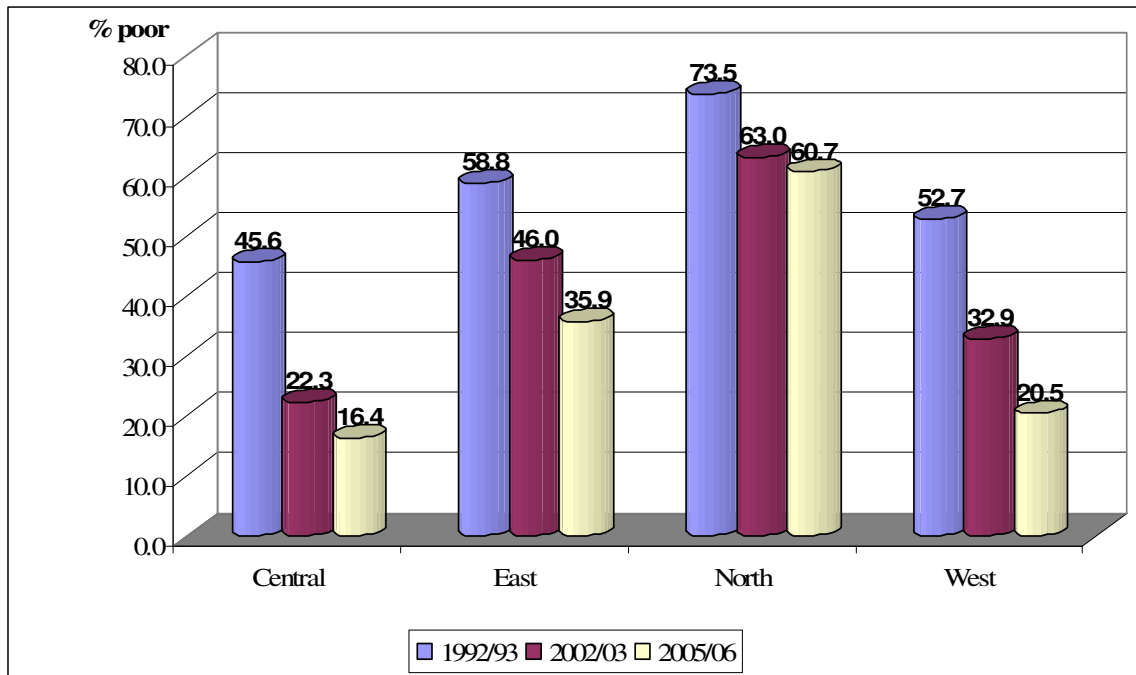
In absolute terms, the number of poor persons in urban areas has remained the same since 1992/93. Nearly 8.4 million Ugandans lived in poverty in 2005/06 and the majority of these poor people lived in rural areas.

**Figure 1: Proportion of poor persons 1992-2006**



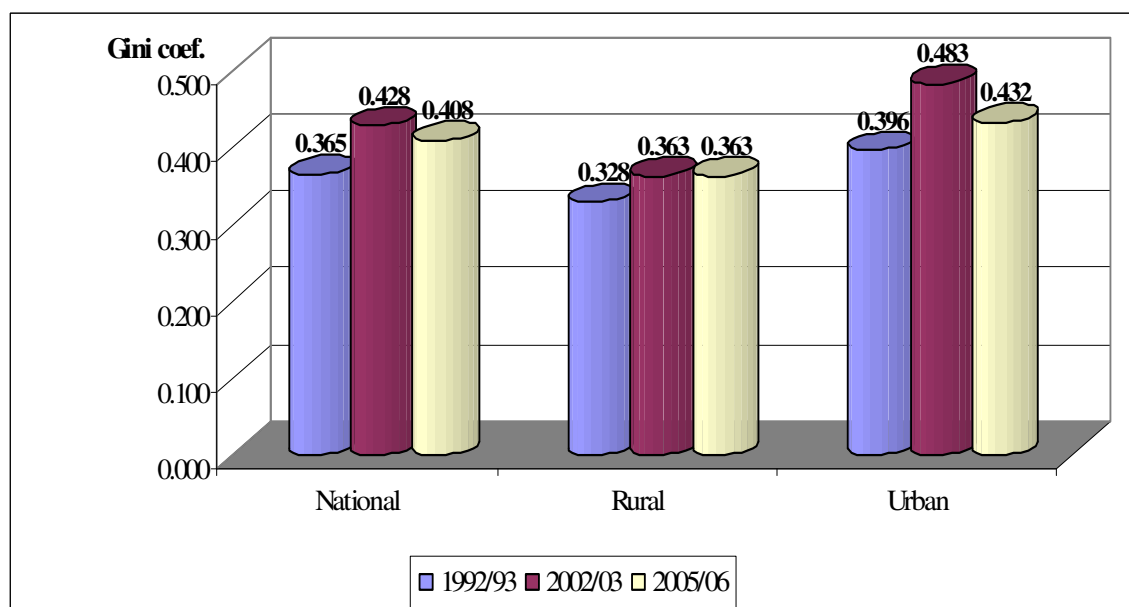
At regional level, the poverty estimates declined regardless of geographical location though the extent of decline varied (Figure 2). The drop in poverty estimates was statistically significant except for the Northern region. Poverty in the Northern region remained higher than in other regions.

**Fig 2: Proportion of poor persons by region, 1992-2006**



Income inequality as measured by the **Gini Coefficient** showed an overall improvement, implying that a broad based growth including the bottom 20% could have led to a reduction in inequality.

**Figure 3: Gini coefficient, 1992-2006**



## **Why the decline in poverty?**

Reasons for the decline in poverty should be investigated but some of the preliminary indications point towards the following factors:

- ❖ Improvement in data collection (more detailed information on expenditure items e.g. airline, taxi fares etc),
- ❖ Transfers to households both local and international
- ❖ Possible sales of assets to finance expenditure on education, health and other general consumption items,
- ❖ Possibility of households borrowing to finance expenditures e.g. from micro-finance institutions, money lenders, etc
- ❖ Increased international coffee prices from an average of 56 US Cents per kilo in 2002/03 to about US\$ 1.5 per kilo in 2005/06.

These and any others must further be investigated to ascertain their influence on poverty trends.

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