

UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM

**STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PARTICIPATORY REVIEW INITIATIVE
(SAPRI)**

THE DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY

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Acronyms

AIDS	:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
GOU	:	Government of Uganda
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
HIS	:	Household Integrated Surveys
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
LSMS	:	Living Standard Measurement Survey
MS	:	Monitoring Survey
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	:	National Resistance Movement
MFPED	:	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
PEAP	:	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PHC	:	Primary Health Care
PPA	:	Participatory Poverty Action
PRA	:	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PWD	:	People with Disability
RRA	:	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SAP	:	Structural Adjustment Program
UDHS	:	Uganda Demographic Household Survey
UPPAP	:	Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Program
WHO	:	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

Girded by an extensive economic recovery program launched in 1987, Uganda has in the period post 1992 experienced tremendous economic growth, but at the same time confronted civil society claims that poverty is on the increase.

The apparent contradiction posed by a buoyant economic reading, political commitment to alleviate poverty on the one hand, and civil society claims that poverty is actually on the increase, on the other hand, raises important questions for this study. First, whether poverty is on the increase or whether it is a matter of "perceptions" that this is so. Second, if poverty is in fact on the increase why economic planners and analysts have not captured it in their reading of the economy by listening to the "voices of the poor" on its different dimensions and planned accordingly.

This report is an assessment of the differences in perceptions of poverty arising from the quantitative statistical analyses of economic growth and the qualitative view of civil society that, despite the good economic indicators, the poverty situation is worsening.

Method of Study

The findings and recommendations of this study are based on a desk review of documents from the Government of Uganda, The World Bank, international development institutions and agencies; academic literature; and case studies by researchers and NGOs involved in poverty alleviation interventions in Uganda.

Key Findings

The key findings of this study indicate that growing gender imbalances, lack of access to services, poor infrastructure, powerlessness social exclusion and lack of "voice" (political power) in decision-making among the poor as facets of poverty exist, and are in some instances on the increase.

Growing Gender Imbalances: Checkered Past and Uncertain Future

Women and men's roles in the economic and social domains continue to reflect a fundamental imbalance in men and women's access to resources and productive activities. Furthermore the increasing responsibilities of substituting government provision of services, has disproportionately fallen on women, thus whilst several measures have been designed to address this gender imbalance such remedial initiatives though necessary are not sufficient.

The Lack of Services and Infrastructure: Barriers in Access

The findings of this study suggest that poor infrastructure, lack of access to vital services - health, education, sanitation, lack of credit and extension facilities, all contribute to community and household poverty.

The Lack of "Voice": Institutional and other Barriers

The findings of this study reveal that despite extensive government policies to promote participation in decision making, lack of information on key issues and the lack of accountability and transparency of leaders act as barriers to the full participation of some citizens.

Social Capital

Social relations and networks are one of the strongest resources possessed by the poor. The findings of this study reveal that these social networks have been undermined in important ways.

These findings do not suggest a mere difference in *perceptions* of poverty but reflect a fundamental dislocation between the intended benefits and actual benefits of the poverty alleviation measures to mitigate against the most adverse effects of poverty.

This study further identifies some of the factors that give rise to such a dislocation as being: differences in the definition of poverty, conceptual and methodological differences, as well as weaknesses in the policy framework for poverty alleviation.

Organization of the Report

The report is divided into five sections that highlight an apparent tension between two diametrically opposite views of the poverty situation in Uganda.

Section one provides a background of Uganda's economic growth and the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs).

Section two reviews conceptual and methodological differences in defining poverty.

Section three examines perceptions of poverty from the perspective of the poor and their lived experiences.

Section four analyzes national poverty alleviation policies and programmes, specifically their areas of focus and their incidence on existing levels and perceptions of poverty in the country.

Section five makes several policy recommendations based on the views of the poor that highlight weaknesses in conventional definitions and measurements of poverty.

The conclusion draws together the main themes that emerge out of the analysis of the country's economic growth and the lived experiences of poverty among different categories of people.

Policy Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study have policy implications that range from conceptual issues of defining, measuring, and targeting poverty to implementation bottlenecks, including lack of information, lack of transparency and accountability, and corruption.

Recommendations

The key recommendations of this study include:

- Improvements in credit facilities for the poor through established lending institutions.
- Improvements in the quality of education under UPE and the linking of UPE to access to further education and employment opportunities.
- Strengthening local governments by giving them greater flexibility in the use of conditional grants on priority needs for poverty alleviation.
- Greater access to markets.
- Improvements in security and infrastructure.
- Strengthening the monitoring and tracking of poverty funds

- Enhancing the participation of recognized social institutions including local elders, Local Councils (LCs) in poverty alleviation measures.

Introduction

We have fought dictatorship, empowered the masses, increased revenue collection and rebuilt the economy...we've made substantial gains in education, agriculture, health and poverty alleviation (President Museveni, The New Vision, January 30, 2001)

When government increases taxes, tells people to build schools, pay for their own medical treatment, improve their own roads, and find markets for their own produce...what do you expect people in such circumstances to do? Instead of redeeming people from poverty, government condemns them to more poverty...(Woman, Moyo District, UPPAP 2000:42)

The above statements are significant because they represent two seemingly contradictory views of recent development in Uganda; yet, they represent two realities existing side by side. Since 1986, Uganda has undergone dramatic political and economic changes. The most significant of these however, has been the country's economic growth. By most standards, Uganda's economic growth, since 1986, is exemplary. Brought back from the brink of collapse after years of mismanagement and plunder by successive governments and compounded by incessant political turmoil, economic growth has averaged over six percent per year over the last decade and half (World Bank 1994). Inflation has declined, from a peak of over 200 percent in 1988 to about 30 percent in the 1990s, and agricultural output, the most important sector of the economy is showing signs of recovery after years of instability (Elson and Evers 1997).

Despite this impressive economic record, Uganda remains one of the poorest countries in Africa with a per capita income of US\$ 220¹, a statistic that is underscored by the growing number of people claiming that their situation is getting worse. The paradox of a fast growing economy and the perception among a cross section of the population that their economic situation has not changed, and in some cases has become worse, raises an important question for this study. Why after more than decade of economic growth and poverty reduction measures do differences in perceptions of poverty persist?

¹ This figure is put at US\$100 per capita by NAPW (NAPW, 1999)

Objectives of the Study

A key objective of this study is to examine and analyze the impact of adjustment policies on the livelihood of ordinary people particularly poor people. The specific purpose of this desk review is to highlight arguments put by civil society that the poverty situation is worsening despite the good economic indicators.

The Specific Terms of Reference for the Study

The specific terms of reference for the study were as follows:

- Review and assess people's understanding of poverty
- Establish the points of discrepancy between measured and perceived poverty
- Highlight the impact of poverty at various levels (household, community, district and national)
- Highlight gender differences in the impact of poverty
- Highlight the benefits by various categories of the population from statistically indicated poverty reduction
- Establish why the indicated economic growth has not translated into improved livelihood or quality of life for the poorest quartile of the population
- Highlight the category of the population that has benefited from the reduction in absolute poverty
- Document people's views on poverty
- Make recommendations, based on the above on how different perceptions of poverty can be incorporated into economic policy formulation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Method for the Study

This study draws on both primary and secondary materials from a range of sources. Government documents are drawn on for information on macro economic performance 1986-2000, and poverty alleviation strategies. Documentation from NGOs was drawn on for information on NGO-led activities and analysis of policies and performance of other actors (official agencies or governments) with respect to participatory poverty alleviation strategies. Academic literature was consulted, in particular, research reports, case studies documenting the policies and performance of governments and official agencies. In addition, documented

initiatives by civil society actors around poverty provided an important source of information on the perspectives of poverty by the poor. The academic literature consulted gives context to ongoing conceptual, methodological, and policy debates concerning the causes, manifestations, and impacts of poverty.

Limitations of the Study

A desk review is not a participatory process and therefore contains certain limitations. Not being part of the research process necessarily entails over reliance on the available data, which sometimes raises more questions than answers. The researcher relies on government documents for data on statistical evidence of growth, as well as research reports on the views and perceptions of the poor. That macro-economic data can be *constructed*² means that most figures must be treated as provisional at best. Similarly, reports on the expressed view and perceptions of poverty by individuals/communities often contain the in-built biases that may not constitute a representative view.

Outline of the Study

This report is divided into five sections. Section one - the background - summarizes the main elements of Uganda's economic growth at the macro level. It discusses the political, economic, and social basis for economic imbalances that characterize the Ugandan economy prior to 1987 and the introduction of SAPs.

Section Two reviews conceptual, methodological and policy issues related to poverty. Since this study focuses on differences in perceptions of poverty, the review discusses different definitions of poverty, their respective underlying assumptions and methodologies, the economic, social and political issues they raise and their incidence on perceptions of poverty.

Section Three explores the way "poor" people perceive poverty; its causes, manifestations and effects; what their priorities for public action are; which institutions they see as effective, both in rural and urban settings. This section provided a close-up view of poverty from the perspective of poor, which gives depth and detail to differentiated views of poverty among

² This observation was made by Lwanga-Ntale (1996), but the emphasis is the authors.

women, men, the youth, elderly, people living with disabilities and other marginalized groups. An account of individual and community ideas and understanding of poverty and access to resources is useful in analyzing the differences that exist between government and civil society concerning the incidence of poverty and its dimensions.

Section Four focuses on the introduction of various poverty-alleviation measures. Against a background of growing economic disparities, this section discusses the areas of focus, interpretations of poverty and the basis for action of the different government poverty interventions.

Section Five draws together the themes of Uganda's exemplary economic growth to the lived experiences of poverty among different segments of the population. It reflects on the weaknesses evident in existing poverty measures and makes recommendations for strengthening existing and future poverty interventions.

The conclusion draws together the main themes of the study, underlining the government's remarkable economic record and the reasons underlying civil society's departure from conventional wisdom concerning the country's economic record. The conclusion makes suggestions of how the differences in perceptions of poverty that exist between government, on the one hand, and civil society on the other hand might be reconciled.

SECTION ONE - BACKGROUND

Back from the Brink?: The Economic Recovery Programme

Genuine economic development implies not only growth, but also persistent and measurable progress and social improvements for the poor and the resource-weak groups in a society. This progress and improvements concern not only incomes, but also all aspects of the poverty complex (Martineussen 1997:299).

1.0 Introduction

Prior to 1986, when the NRM came to power, the Ugandan economy was in a state of crisis. The economic crisis, which exposed contradictions embedded in post-colonial pattern of accumulation, was manifest in revenue falls, industrial decline, rampant inflation, a balance of payments crisis, and a debt service problem, among other symptoms. As an example of the sharp economic decline real income per capita was some 40 percent below its level of 20 years earlier, government spending was only 8 percent of GDP compared with 20 percent in 1971, the exchange rate was grossly overvalued, and parallel markets were out of control (Harvey and Robinson 1994:1).

Despite the dismal economic performance, and sharp drop in the general standard of living, in the first year of the NRM government, the new government, was reluctant to accept IMF and World Bank inspired programmes of adjustment³. Determined to build "an independent, integrated and self sustaining national economy"⁴, the government experimented with various economic measures to lift the country out of its economic slump, including barter trade arrangements. This section summarizes the main elements of the IMF/World Bank supported economic recovery programme in Uganda and their impact on the economy and the ordinary Ugandans.

³ Persuaded in part by perceptions of past failure of Structural Adjustment Programmes, and in part by the NRM's Marxist ideological persuasions (Tamale 2000).

1.1 Structural Adjustment Programmes

The NRM government introduced the IMF/World Bank supported Economic Recovery Programmes in 1987(MFPED, 2000)⁵. Typically, the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) adopted by the NRM government conformed to the IMF/World Bank prescriptions for quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy,

First, the package focused on the stabilization of the budget and balance of payment deficits. This was accomplished through the devaluation of Ugandan shilling by more than 75 percent, deregulating trade and improving fiscal management. Second, the government instituted extensive public sector reforms and privatization. This process entailed downsizing the civil service and the privatization of parastatals. In a country where the majority of the population is involved in comparatively less productive agricultural and informal sector activities this meant raising productivity to boost foreign exchange earnings. Emphasis was placed on production for export and diversification into non-traditional agricultural produce for export. Fourth, reducing the role of the state in social sectors. While this particular move has been criticized for removing the "public good" out of education and health service provision, it was rationalized as an imperative for more efficient *leaner* state that would be a facilitator not a provider of services. The last condition for adjustment was the promotion of the private sector.

1.1.2 The Impact of Structural Adjustment on the Economy

Whereas in 1988 it was almost impossible to find anyone in government who thought that structural adjustment policies would work, in 1994 it was hard to find anyone who opposed them (Harvey and Robinson, 1996).

After a faltering start, support for persistence with macro-economic reforms was steadily strengthened by evidence of success of the economy that started to show signs of recovery most noticeably after 1992. Real GDP having fallen in the years prior to 1987 started to rise at an average of 2.9 per cent per annum. The diversification of the economy resulted in the share of agriculture in GDP declining from 57.9% in 1986 to 42.7% in 1998. Similarly, the policy of export diversification has resulted in the share of coffee export earnings to total export receipts falling from 92.2% in 1986 to 55. 9% in 1998/9 (MFPED, 2000: 12). Industrial growth has

⁴ Ten Point Programme 1986

been particularly rapid with the share of the manufacturing sector increasing from 5.4% in 1986 to 9.4% in 1998.

Statistical evidence suggests that in five years, beginning in 1992, Uganda had attained a 21% drop in poverty (head count index), while real GDP growth has averaged over 7% in the last decade and underlying inflation has averaged 6%.⁶ In 1992, the poorest 20% of the population shared 18.6% of enrolment in primary education. By 1999, the share of the poorest 20% of the population had risen to 24.2%, an increase that largely benefited girls from rural areas. In 1999, 17% of the rural household had access to formal credit facilities compared to 8% in 1992. In 1999, access to formal credit range from 24% in the West to 20% in the East, 12% in the Central region, and 6% in the North. 45% of the loans were used to establish non-agricultural enterprises; 24% were invested in education and health, 14% utilized for purchase of inputs; 9% was invested in land and livestock; and 7% was used to buy household goods. Access to safe water in rural areas rose from 11% in 1986 to 46% in 1998. In urban areas, access to safe water increased from 44% in 1986 to 50% in 1998. Infant mortality rates declined from 188 per 1,000 live births in 1986, to 88 per 1,000 live births in 1998 (Budget Speech 15th June 2000).

Thus, another reason for supporting the reforms was its alleged impact on poverty. The tremendous decline in percentages of people living below the Poverty Lines is indicated in Tables 1 and 2 below. Assessment of poverty in Table 1 is based on income needed to meet basic food and non-food requirements, and assessment in Table 2 is based on income needed to meet basic food requirements alone (Appleton, 1999).

Percentages Shares of the Population Living below Poverty Lines

Table 1	Percentage living below the poverty line		
	Rural	Urban	National
1992/93	59.4	28.2	55.5
1993/94	56.7	20.6	52.2
1994/95	54.0	22.3	50.1
1995/96	53.0	19.5	48.5
1997/98	48.2	16.3	44.0

⁵ MFPED, "Uganda's Economic Performance since the NRM came to Power in 1986", p. 1.

⁶ *The New Vision*-NRM Day Supplement, Friday, January 26, 2001.

Table 2 Percentage living below the hard core poverty line

Year	Rural	Urban	National
1992/93	39.2	11.4	35.8
1993/94	33.8	7.0	30.4
1994/95	31.8	9.3	29.0
1995/96	31.2	6.4	27.9
1997/98	28.0	6.5	25.1

Source: Appleton *et al* (1999)

Figures in Tables 1 and 2 were derived from the Integrated Household Survey which was conducted in 1992/3 and four monitoring surveys carried out in the following four fiscal years. The method employed to arrive at those statistics was the head count measure of poverty, that provides information on the number of people living below a given poverty line, but not on the degree of poverty of those living below the poverty line (MFPED: 2000). The surveys carried out were limited to a five-year period. The results obtained, however, are consistent with the macroeconomic data and they indicate significant increases in real per capita incomes during the 1990s as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Mean Per Capita Monthly Consumption Expenditures: 1992/93-1997/98.

Shillings; constant 1989 prices

Year	Rural	Urban	Uganda
1992/93	4735	10752	5452
1993/94	4862	11645	5718
1994/95	5206	12067	6058
1995/96	5242	12246	6187
1997/98	5488	11979	6353

Increase from

1992/93-1997/98	15.9%	11.4%	16.5%
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Source: Appleton *et al* (1999)

Results from the Tables above demonstrate that the economic growth brought about by adjustment policies has not widened income inequalities, but has led to reductions in both absolute and hard core poverty. The method used and the figures obtained demonstrated that the incidence of poverty at the national level fell by 11.5% points between 1992/93 and in

1997/98, from 55.5% to 44%. The share of the population living below the hard core poverty line fell by 10.7% points from 35.8% to 25.1% in the same period. At least two million people were lifted out of poverty over the course of five years, and almost as many people were lifted out of hard core poverty.

It is hypothesized that it is rarely possible to cushion the adverse political impact of economic reforms by identifying the probable losers and compensating them (EC Issue Paper 1994). This proposition suggests that while the figures on poverty indicate that the number of those living below the hard core poverty line decreased and that adjustment policies did not widen the inequality gap, there were losers and winners in the course of adjustment. The next section attempts to identify the losers and winners of adjustment policies by highlighting the main attributes of each category.

1.2 Losers and Winners of the Economic Reforms

In accepting the implementation of the IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment package the NRM government set itself the task, primarily with the external support, of redressing the effects of an economy that for years based on administrative controls, legal restrictions and bureaucratic regulations. In the place of a culture of controls, the government embraced a new philosophy of economic liberalization and deregulation. The changes in economic policies were bound to impact on the livelihoods of ordinary people in ways that obviated differences among winners and losers.

Economic policy reforms, such as exchange rate devaluation, trade liberalization, the liberalization of coffee marketing and financial liberalization shifted incentives towards sectors in which most of the poor earn their livelihoods. Significant shifts were towards agriculture and labor intensive productive activities. Those reforms removed some of the opportunities for extracting rents at the expense of the public from privileged access to resources that primarily benefit the politically and economically powerful. These advantages notwithstanding, the wealthier sections of society with better education and access to physical and financial assets were better placed than the poor to take advantage of the expansion of income earning opportunities provided by economic growth and market liberalization.

About 90% of Ugandans live in rural areas, with the majority of them (approximately 80%) dependent on agriculture as smallholder subsistence farmers. A central assumption of the economic reform programme was that liberalization of crop marketing combined with increased producer prices, would primarily benefit these small holders, most notably, coffee farmers, but also producers of other export crops (Kitabire 1994: 12).

In reality, however, the benefits of economic reforms were unevenly distributed. The primary beneficiaries in the agricultural sector were those producing tradables rather than farmers producing mainly food crops who are among the poorest section of the rural population. An overall increase in producer prices of food staples; the real producer prices of maize, cassava, sorghum, millet and matoke fell by an average of 25 per cent between 1987 and 1992 (World Bank 1993:49 cited in Harvey and Robinson 1996:36). Another important assumption was that increases in agricultural outputs corresponded to improvements in the welfare of the rural poor. Similarly, it was assumed that the increase in output corresponded to increases in rural incomes and hence to the benefit of small holder farmers. This assumption did not take into account the fact that wage labor in agriculture is very low (Harvey and Robinson 1996:36).

Low levels of productivity and hence income resulting from a range of supply side constraints facing poor small-holder farmers explains the persistent pervasive poverty among food crop farmers. Notable constraints that impinged on the capacity of small food crop farmers included, the use of rudimentary farm technology, land degradation, ill health of farmers, lack of access to credit facilities, and lack of accessibility to markets due to poor transport infrastructure (Government of Uganda, 1999b). Policy reforms introduced so far have been much less successful in tackling those deep rooted supply side constraints in agriculture than in rectifying policy induced distortions such as those in foreign exchange markets and export crop marketing.

Despite the favorable economic indicators, noticeable fluctuations in the economy, ranging from between 10.5% per annum in 1994/95 to 5.5% per annum in 1997/8 raise questions about the sustainability of the recorded growth rates. That large donor in-flows have increased

Uganda's debt stock and repayment burden⁷ raises questions concerning the sustainability of a donor driven growth and its implications for poverty and poverty alleviation strategies, particularly since government revenues for funding for social services remain very limited (Lwanga-Ntale 1996).

Thus, the reliance on quantifiable measurements of poverty (income, expenditure, and consumption)⁸ at the expense of qualitative evidence of poverty that provide insights about the nature of impoverishment, or poverty processes can lead to different interpretations of the data available on growth rates and the poor as a percentage of the growth. The next section examines differences in the definition of poverty arising from these conceptual and methodological differences.

⁷ Himbara (1995) for example, argues that Uganda can be likened to an international Bantustan on account of its donor driven growth.

SECTION TWO

Defining Poverty: Conceptual and Methodological Issues

2.0 Introduction

The ambiguity surrounding poverty - its definition, its causes, and its manifestations - illustrates important conceptual and methodological differences. Thus, to assess the impact of structural adjustment programmes on the economy and conversely on the incidence of poverty in Uganda particularly among the rural poor, would be premised on an understanding of the different perspectives of poverty and their underlying assumptions.

This section examines different definitions of poverty and the underlying assumptions associated with distinct families of indicators since policies for poverty alleviation are often influenced by particular sets of poverty indicators.

2.1 Definitions of Poverty

The way poverty is understood affects the way it is tackled-design of interventions, targeting, expected and actual impact, and how it is measured (UPPAP, 2000: 11).

The above statement suggests that differences in perceptions of poverty could be attributed to the way in which poverty is defined and who is defining it. This proposition raises several questions: Who are the poor? What are their basic characteristics? Are the poor a homogeneous group? If they differ, why, where, and how do they differ.

2.1.1 Who are the poor?

There is a broad agreement among government, NGOs and the World Bank as who can be classified as poor in Uganda. The World Bank report "Growing out of Poverty" (19**) lists six main categories of poor and vulnerable people in Uganda:

- landless peasants
- female headed households
- Older people and their dependants

⁸ Favored by most World Bank Poverty Assessments (PAs) and those of other donor agencies as well as recipient states engaged in the measurement and analysis of poverty. Lockwood and Whitehead (1998) see this as a fundamental

- Orphaned, displace, and neglected children
- People living with disabilities
- people living in areas prone to natural calamities e.g those in northern Uganda

In addition to this list, PAPSCA, Oxfam and Action Aid identify other categories of poor people in their reports that are not listed above. Among those not listed are refugees, pastoralists, and people living in small and often isolated communities. According to Lwanga-Ntale (1997), the last category of poor people is virtually absent in the literature on poverty in Uganda⁹.

2.1.2 Poverty: the condition

Analysts tend to distinguish between relative poverty and absolute poverty. Absolute poverty is considered to be a situation where individuals or households are unable to meet their basic needs - food, shelter or clothing. In addition, they are unable to meet survival needs such as education, health care and self-determination leading to feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability.

Relative poverty, on the other hand, concerns individual deprivation measured relative to others in society. When individuals cannot access goods and services enjoyed by fellow citizens it is unacceptable but is deemed to be a life threatening condition as absolute poverty. In addition to the deprivations cited, poverty encompasses a wide range of wants that can not be easily quantified, such as powerlessness and social exclusion.

Vulnerability and powerlessness as real factors that contribute to poverty are not easily subjected to statistical measurements. In his study of poverty across six districts, Lwanga-Ntale found that the communities visited defined poverty in different ways that transcended basic material paucity. He argues, for example, that whereas both men and women tend to define poverty in terms of some "lack" or deficiency", men's definition places more emphasis on material possessions whereas those of women tend to focus on non-material aspects of well being. The difference in the definition of poverty between men and women is attributed to their

methodological choice, since it locks the poverty Assessment into reliance on expenditure data from household surveys which in addition to being narrow, are also often unreliable because they mask important differences in the impact of poverty.

social status in society, their relationship with men, lack of ownership and access to productive assets, limited participation in decision-making and heavy workload. Furthermore, different perceptions of poverty may also arise from age differences, differences in ones physical and mental and/or psychological *handicaps*.

The broad differences in the definition of poverty suggest that poverty is a dynamic process, which constitutes an amalgam of socio-economic, cultural, political and other deprivations affecting individuals, households, and communities, often resulting in the following conditions:

- lack of access to basic necessities
- a feeling of powerlessness
- disenfranchisement
- Accentuated gender imbalance. For example, certain cultural practices such as brideprice may accentuate the gender imbalance. Men may find it unaffordable, while for women the practice of bride price undermines their status in the family with undesired out come of denying them access to assets and limiting their decision-making power.
- Isolation and social exclusion
- Erosion of traditional cultures, values, and social welfare systems

Another factor that may contribute to differences in perceptions of poverty concerns the *location* of poverty. Indeed, an important distinction is often made between rural and urban poverty. On the one hand, rural poverty is characterized by failure to educate children, limited access to infrastructure facilities and services, poor yields, alcoholism, impoverishment at old age, and the disintegration of families. On the other hand, urban poverty is associated with unemployment and/or low pay compared to cost of living, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infestation, frequent family misunderstandings, idleness, early marriages and pregnancies, as well as poor living conditions that lack drainage and sanitation facilities.

Despite the broad range of conditions associated with poverty, a common denominator for most definitions of poverty remains the notion of "lack" or deficiency", criteria that present

⁹ He cites the example of the Batwa in Kisoro who are highly marginalized (in some parts excluded from participating in social and political decision-making).

measurement problems. The next section examines the different types of measurements of poverty and their attendant problems.

2.2 Measurements of Poverty

The measurement of poverty in Uganda as elsewhere presents a problem for social scientists and researchers alike. Measurements of poverty depend on the purpose for which poverty is measured as well as the available of data. Despite an emerging literature on the multidimensional nature of poverty and the need to expand conventional sets of indicators, measurements of poverty tend to be biased toward traditional economic indicators.

Some of the types of poverty measurements include; the poverty line; income distribution; poverty in terms of consumption. The type of measurement of poverty adopted reflects fundamental assumptions about the nature, causes, and manifestation of poverty.

At the root of the conceptual divide regarding poverty measurement are distinctions between means and ends indicators of poverty, as well as, subjective and objective indicators of poverty.

Means refer to indicators of inputs intended to achieve an end result, while the latter measures the ultimate outcomes. Traditionally, poverty has been measured using "means" indicators of which objectively identify income/consumption patterns as the best proxy for poverty measurement. The method for establishing these patterns is usually through large-scale, random household surveys. The main advantage of means indicators of poverty is that there are many to choose from. The main drawback of using this method is the use of proxy or sets of proxies with varying degrees of correlation with one's definition of poverty. According to Moser (1998), this objective approach tends to produce a narrow reductionist view of poverty, which serves the technocratic needs of development professionals, while failing to understand the complex, diverse, local realities in which the poor live. Furthermore, based on extensive poverty research Lwanga-Ntale highlights a problem common to some econometric measurements of poverty. He cites the example of two conflicting reports from the World Bank. Using the poverty line of 6,000/= one report stated that 55% of Ugandans can be defined as poor. Another report based on the distribution of welfare as a measure of poverty - the ratio

of household expenditure per adult equivalent to the poverty line - classified 61% of Ugandans as poor.

Subjective measurements of poverty tend to rely on indicators of poverty status that emerge out of the experiences of the poor, collected through participatory techniques that include focus group discussions, and visualization exercises. Although ends indicators of poverty correlate more closely with the phenomenon being measured, their main drawback is that may not be adequate for the purposes of monitoring poverty in the short and medium term. Practitioners promoting more "participatory" approaches to poverty have been criticized for providing menus and checklists of "practical implications" that tend to stop short of generalized operational frameworks for participatory local-level poverty reduction interventions (Chambers, 1989, 1995:37).

An added dimension to the problem of polarized alternatives to poverty measurements concerns the time framework of poverty measurements. Given the dynamic nature of poverty the question is the extent to which a one off measurement of poverty, i.e. household survey, can provide accurate and useful information. According to Lwanga Ntale (1997) some people get into it (poverty), other get out of it, and some times the same people get into it and out of it as a result of endogenous and exogenous circumstances related to changes in season or changes in economic or social circumstances.

Thus, given the variability of poverty, it is argued that expenditure based measurements are not equipped to obviate important differences among different segments of the poor, as well as, the different causes and impacts of poverty. These measurement-related problems highlight the need to broaden definitions of poverty and its measurement.

An important outcome of recent conceptual debates has been the introduction of such concepts as vulnerability and capabilities as important components in the measurement of poverty. These concepts mainly derived from the rural famine/food security research, and which focus on assets and entitlements suggests that a more robust understanding of differentiation in the evolution of poverty, statistical measurements of poverty have to be supplemented by disaggregated qualitative data on the non-income dimensions of poverty.

This rich realm of conceptual, methodological, and policy concerns provides a basis for the next section which examines the different perceptions of poverty from the perspective of the "poor."

SECTION THREE

Poverty Amidst Plenty: Perceptions of Poverty from the Margins

*Poverty is all-pervasive like sunshine
The rain that soaks the poor does not stop - Kabarole*

A poor community is easily recognized by its appearance. It has no roads, the houses are poor, has no cash crops, no cattle, and the members of that community use poor farming methods - Bushenyi

Women do not profit from their labor. They lack access to productive resources and lack the necessary skills to manage income generation activities even where the opportunities exist (Nsibambi 1996).

3.0 Introduction

The above statements by participants in the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment (UPPAP) exercise capture the vulnerability and powerlessness of the poor. The statement by Professor Nsibambi underscores the multidimensionality of poverty and the fact that the poor are not a homogenous group (Nsibambi 1996: 4). Furthermore, the contrast between perspectives of poverty captured above is an indication of the way in which the concept of poverty is personally appropriated and interpreted by different groups.

This section provides a close-up view of poverty and gives depth and detail to the way in which "poor" individuals and communities perceive poverty; its causes; their priorities for public action; and, which institutions they see as effective, both in rural and urban settings. The discussion of the issues that individuals and communities identify as key indicators of poverty revolves around two questions. First, To what extent are perceptions of poverty among different categories of poor conditioned by different needs/wants? Second, to what extent are powerlessness and vulnerability a product of imbalances in access to economic decision-making power, or part of institutional and cultural norms? The first question relates to differences in the way in which different categories of the poor; women, the aged, the youth, and people living with disabilities perceive their condition. The second question relates to the uneven distribution of decision-making power, both within households and in national policy forums. The next section examines some of the sources of differences between men and women on poverty.

3.1 Gender Related Differences in the Perception of Poverty

It is widely recognized that women are economically, legally, and culturally disadvantaged. A fundamental imbalance usually relates to the respective rights and obligations of men and women under the law. Another imbalance concerns the highly differentiated economic opportunities available to men and women. Furthermore, lack of access to decision-making power, both within households and in national fora prevents women from effectively participating in self-determined change. Recently, provisions under the new Constitution, 1995, and the Local Government Act, 1997, have gone some way in addressing many of the legal barriers against women advancement and empowerment. For example, Article 33 (1) of the Constitution, accords men and women equal recognition under the constitution with the same rights and obligations. Similarly, Article 33 (6), prohibits cultures, customs, and/or traditions which undermine the dignity, welfare, status, or interests of women.

While, the rights of women as well as their representation and participation in decision-making are legally defined, in reality many of the barriers faced by women in attempting to break the cycle of poverty trap are often culturally specific. The gender relations governing many households are not explicit and therefore not amenable to legal prescriptions. Thus, the different ways in which men and women in particular social contexts perceive poverty is often related to implicit rules that govern ownership of productive assets, division of labor, and the exercise of political power.

3.1.2 Division of labor

An overview of gender division of labor in Uganda indicates that different roles and tasks are assigned to women, men, and children. Men tend to perform managerial roles. In rural areas, this may take the form of managing livestock and produce, such as coffee and cotton, for the market. Women on the other are expected to assume the responsibilities for the family's subsistence. In addition, in the livestock and crop sectors, those activities that involve slow backbreaking and painstaking labor tasks such as weeding and primary processing of farm products are left to women (CBR, 1996:26). The roles of women do not often involve a share of the power and responsibility for decisions within households over the use, ownership, and benefits from the farm labor activities especially those that earn more income and are less

backbreaking. Children are usually given lighter tasks that do not require extensive physical strength (Keller 1996).

The division of labor between men and women is thus fundamentally based on produced cultural norms that are perpetrated and nurtured within households. Factors that are perceived to accentuate this culturally determined divisions are the unprecedented shift from agricultural labor by men to other sectors or to full time pursuit of leisure activities. A study on alcoholism in Mbarara district for example reveals that a considerable size of the male population spends most of its time on the road sides and beer halls (Rutabajuka, 1992). It is argued that one of the reasons why men and the youth can afford to be on roadsides and beer halls is the shift in family responsibilities (food, shelter, education, and health) from men to women.

3.1.3 Exercising political Power

Men are known to make decisions in homes even when they are idle. In rural households men make decisions about the types of food crops to be grown and the size of land to be allocated to them (Barton and Wamai, 1994). This lack of ownership over the means of production and even the basic means for self-provisioning provides an important explanation of women's collective identity of dependence and powerlessness. Conversely, the dependence of women on men for their very existence tilts the power relations within households in favor of men. That women do not (traditionally) own or control the means of production increases their sense of poverty.¹⁰

Differences in power relations between women and men are used to formulate rules, norms and values, which determine the allocation of resources. This means that those with more purchasing power and ability to negotiate for choices are the only ones who can use the resources (e.g. labor) which the subordinated and discriminated groups (the women, children, disabled) can provide, for example in agriculture. Thus, an important difference in the way women perceive poverty is related to their differentiated access to power and its exercise within households.

¹⁰ Ahikire, J. (1998) "Gender and Poverty in Contemporary Uganda": A Paper presented at a Conference; "Eradicating Poverty in the World, A Mortal Obligation", Organized by Uganda Christian University and The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Nkozi, Uganda, (7-10 September 1998).

When women perceive poverty as lack of opportunity to make decisions about allocation and use of resources, it therefore evident that is based on societal ascribed rules that allocate production resources, (especially land) and the extent to which it is difficult to change such cultural set up.

In some cases, these rules, norms and values are used by men and women who have higher status, age and are in urban as compared to rural location, to formulate (informally) resource use rights among themselves. It is these **resource allocation and use rules** that shape differences in perceptions of poverty because it is these rules that determine women and men's access to information, credit facilities, and assets.

Kasente (1998), for example, raises a number of important questions about the tensions between the current policy emphasis in Uganda on non-traditional export crops (NTEC) while food security considerations are a priority in women's (and to a lesser extent men's) farming strategies. Self-provisioning is crucial to rural livelihoods and while, cash crops and food crops are not mutually exclusive, the question is how "commercialization" of farming will affect women's well-being and work burdens (Razavi 1998).

Another argument suggests that growth in non-traditional export crops, which are the most female intensive exports, may have a harmful impact on girl's schooling. The box below illustrates this point. The box is reproduced from Elson and Evers 1998: 27.

Text Box 2

More vanilla Exports: Less time for girls' education

In response to reform in agriculture, production in vanilla has expanded. Vanilla, is a high value added, high quality export crop, which is easily grown with other crops. However, its cultivation, which is done almost exclusively by women and girls, is varying labor intensive. Pollination, which is done by hand at crucial stages in the growth cycle, is often done by girls at the expense of their schooling, thus undermining social policy which aims to promote girls' education (SIDA, 1996).

An important question remains therefore the extent to which policies, programmes, and law reforms make a difference to the practical lives of the majority of Ugandan women in ways that shape their perception of poverty. In so far as implicit rules govern the allocation of

financial and human resources differently among women and men, then the opportunities for women and men to gain from poverty alleviation strategies differ and this differences contributes to differences in their perceptions of poverty.

3.2 Urban Related Differences in Perception of Poverty

Urban and rural poverty differs. The main features of urban poverty include lack of employment, poorly paid jobs, low incomes compared to the high cost of living, and the lack of social capital safety nets. Perceptions of poverty among the urban poor in Kampala for example reveal that urban poor are at a greater disadvantage than their rural counterparts. They suggest that in rural areas, it is possible to get by without a great deal of money because accommodation, transport, food and water are cheaper (UPPAP Report 2000:54). Furthermore, rural poor have the advantage of extensive social networks through which the most obvious effects of poverty can be decreased. The absence of these social networks in urban areas are viewed as increasing the reliance on cash which determines a person's access to food, shelter and the basic necessities of existing.

The urban poor are largely involved in the informal economy. Small traders blame excessive taxation by both the Kampala city Council and the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) for the slide into poverty by many would be entrepreneurs (Lwanga-Ntale 1996: 42).

3.3 Disability Related Differences in Perceptions of Poverty

Generally, poverty among people living with disabilities is defined at the individual level, dictated by the physical inability to participate in activities that can generate income to improve on their status (UPPAP 2000:19).

Perceptions of poverty among this group of urban and rural poor focuses on their social exclusion and lack of access to productive assets. The continued need to rely on people's good will makes them particularly vulnerable to changes in the general well being of society and hence the capacity of individuals in society to continue underwriting their very survival.

The differences in perceptions of poverty among different categories of people reveal that perceptions of poverty, as well as, the condition of poverty itself affect different people, and/ or

groups of people differently. Moreover, it demonstrates that the poor are not homogeneous groups with similar needs and wants, nor do they experience poverty in the same way.

The following section examines the key elements of government poverty alleviation strategies and discusses the main focus of these strategies and the various provisions.

SECTION FOUR

Planning for the "Poor": A Government Strategy

The majority of Uganda's population lives below the poverty line so that the target of alleviating want remains an overriding concern (UNDP 1997).

4.0 Introduction

Whether poverty is defined as a paucity of material, productive, social and political assets and, whether it is measured objectively or subjectively, the problem of poverty is at the heart of current debates on the consequences of adjustment policies. A common question that is often raised concerning the relationship between SAPs and poverty in different contexts is the extent to which adjustment policies are responsible for increasing the incidence of poverty. A response in the affirmative would suggest that aggregate statistics on economic growth mask the multiple deprivations experienced by different groups within society.

Since 1992, the NRM government has taken strident steps to address some of the perceived causes and manifestations of poverty. This section takes stock of the various government poverty interventions. Against a background of growing economic disparities, the section examines the rationale and focus of some of the poverty strategies adopted by government. Central to this discussion is the question that relates to the extent to which poverty measures reflect differences in the interests and concerns of individuals and groups.

The following text box highlights the key elements in the government's poverty eradication strategy.

Key Policies in the Poverty Alleviation Strategy in Uganda.

Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) 1997.

Objective:

- improve the welfare of all Ugandans as well as eradicating poverty

PEAP provides the broad policy framework for poverty alleviation in Uganda. It is designed to create a framework for economic growth, ensuring good governance and security, directly increasing the ability of the poor to raise their incomes, and directly increasing the quality of life of the poor.

PEAP as an important policy framework can be viewed as contributing to the realization of other policies such as the following:

The National Gender Policy for Uganda, 1997.

Objectives:

- evolve a society that is both informed and conscious of gender and development issues and concerns
- to mainstream gender concerns in the national development process

The Agriculture Policy ¹¹

Objectives:

- promote farming systems and land use practices that conserve and enhance land productivity
- Increase community participation based on national, district, and local land use plans.

The Land Policy.¹²

Objectives:

- regulates the tenure, ownership, and general aspects of land management in Uganda
- Empower the citizens of Uganda, through the Land Act 1998, to own and utilise land as a means of generating income for the households in Uganda.

The Decentralisation Policy¹³.

Objectives:

- Devolve power to the lowest local units of administration, a process legally defined by the Local Governments Act, 1997.
- Encourage local population through Local Councils to participate in all government and even non-governmental organisations' activities affecting their own livelihoods.

The Energy Policy

Objective:

- Encourage improved and efficient energy use through the use alternative sources of energy, e.g. solar energy
- ameliorate on the problem of environmental degradation in Uganda, which among other things is a cause to the prevailing poverty situation in the country

Universal primary Education (UPE) 1997

Objective:

- to democratize primary

The Functional Adult Literacy Programme

Objective:

- provide adults with numeracy and literacy skills to enable them to participate in development

As noted above, the government has instituted various policies within the overall framework of PEAP geared toward poverty alleviation. At the heart of the policies introduced is the need to reduce inherent gender imbalances and promote the increased participation of the individuals, and traditionally marginalized groups in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

¹¹ *Uganda Country Report* in UNEP/UNDP/Dutch Report on the *Development and Harmonization of Laws relating to Wildlife Management*; The East African Sub-Regional Project, Vol.6, December 1999, p.192.

¹² *Ibid.* p.193.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 193.

Bearing in mind the inherent social imbalances that exists, even among the "poor", the next section examines in detail the main provisions for poverty alleviation in the policies on agriculture, adult education, and financial credit scheme. The purpose for focusing on these areas is to understand the extent to which the strategies adopted address different aspects of poverty, including differentiated access to resources and skills by the poor to effectively participate; and the extent to which poverty interventions reach their intended beneficiaries.

4.1 Agricultural Reforms and Poverty.

Poverty reduction in Uganda largely hinges on the response of the agricultural sector and the success of the institutional reforms put in place. Poverty strategies in the country are heavily dependent on agriculture not only because of its current dominant share of GDP, employment and exports but also because the country's current comparative advantage lies in this sector (Bonger & Bahiigwa: 1998). Furthermore, it is recognized that 80% (which is predominantly female) of the labor force, based in rural areas earn less than half of the total national income. Thus, the purpose of plans to modernize agriculture as a poverty strategy is direct response to the need to increase rural incomes, ensuring food security by increasing agricultural productivity and protecting the environment for the present and future generations. It also aims at improving access of women and youth to productive assets (especially land and financial services) and empowering them to undertake income-generating activities.

The table below illustrates the distribution of men and women across the productive economy.

Table 4 - Structure of Productive Economy

	Share of GDP	Share of Exports	Gender Intensity of Production	
	(%)	(%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Agriculture	49.0	99	75	25
O/w Food crops	33.0	-	80	20
Traditional export crops	3.5	75	60	40
NTAEs	1.0	24	80	20
Industry	14.3	1	15	85
O/w Manufacturing	6.8	-	n/a	n/a
Services	36.6	-	32	68

Notes: O/W: of which

Gender intensity of production: female and male shares of employment

NTAE: Non-traditional Agricultural exports

Sources: Based on Integrated household Survey and Bjokman et.al cited in GoU and NCC 1994:173; World Bank, 1993:26; World Bank 1995a:106; World Bank 1995d.

The table above reveals that women account for most of the labor in the production of all three categories of agricultural output:

- Food consumption
- Traditional exports
- Non-traditional exports

Elson and Evers (1997), note that it is disturbing that in an economy where agriculture is the main source of exports and livelihoods, that the ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the Agricultural Research Organization, together receive only 2 percent of total expenditure. They argue that such under-resourcing place limitations on the achievements of both economic and gender focused policy objectives.

Low productivity in the agricultural sector has often led to vulnerability of hunger in cases of crop failure due to drought or other natural calamities. Few households have large enough

buffer harvests to carry them through a season of crop failure. Thus, in a female intensive, small holder economy such as Uganda, gender -aware public support for agriculture is crucial given the information and resource constraints faced by small-scale farmers-and particularly women farmers. According to Elson and Evers (1997), the provision of infrastructure has failed to reflect adequately the marketing needs of small farmers: poor roads and inadequate public transport makes transport costs extremely high and cut deep into farmers profit margins and women farmers face greater barriers than men in gaining access to transport and information (Elson and Evers 1997:13).

4.2 Functional Adult Literacy and Poverty

By 1990 nearly 60% of women in Uganda were still illiterate. The rate for some districts is higher than the national rates. Women constitute over 51% of the total population in Uganda (1991 Population Census) and support economic growth through agricultural productivity. They contribute at least 60% of the total labor force in the agriculture sector and account for about 80% of food production. They are, therefore, a vital force in national development. Women also provide family and community health care and play a vital role in the education and management of the community as well as management of the environment (MGLSD with World Bank: 1999). Interestingly, however, women in Uganda have limited access to the means of controlling production means and, hence capital. Control of means of production and capital in this country has predominantly remained in the hands of men thus creating an almost perpetual women poverty syndrome.

Having realized that historical gender imbalances between women and men are directly related to education, the government has introduced several measures in education to redress these imbalances. The policies introduced include, Universal Primary Education (UPE) to enhance access to education, and the Functional Adult Literacy programme, which provides skills in reading, writing, and counting integrated with practical skills. It is a participatory approach that motivates the learners to continue searching for knowledge and skills that will help them to improve on whatever activities they are engaged in for the betterment of their lives and the community they live in. Literacy levels have a direct relationship with poverty levels in the country.

The programme compliments other gender sensitive policies that have helped to narrow that gap. Uganda made impressive achievements in the last decade in this regard. Women are now getting more involved in the planning and implementing of projects that are geared towards eradicating poverty in the country as a whole. There are some positive indicators such as increased enrolment of girls in schools and increased participation of women in both legislative and administrative structures. Illiteracy among rural women, however, continues to be a barrier to women emancipation in the country despite the conducive environment created by the present government. There are still wide differences between women and men regarding access and control over productive resources, education and training levels, employment opportunities, poverty levels, participation in politics, and access to judicial structures. The progress made in policy formulation towards gender equality has not been applied in planning and implementation of development intervention to desired extent (MGLSD with World Bank: 1999).

4.3 Micro Finance Credit Schemes and Poverty

There is a wide gap between women and men regarding access to and control over productive resources, education, and training levels. The gap also is manifest in employment opportunities, poverty levels in politics, and access to judicial structures.¹⁴

Rural adults, mostly women, who are illiterate often, lack the entrepreneurial skills necessary for utilizing borrowed money. They also cannot benefit from the many modern markets that have been established which involve an increased number of transactions and demand literacy skills for filling of forms, travelling elsewhere in connection with business and other transactions. Sustainable national development requires effective involvement of both men and women. Women constitute 51% of Uganda's population. They are, therefore, a vital force in national development. Illiteracy among rural women continues to be a barrier to poverty eradication in the country especially among the vulnerable groups.

Government introduced the "Entandikwa" Credit Scheme to address the poverty situation in the country through credit scheme facilities to previously marginalied groups, which lacked

access to the credit through the traditional financial institutions. Accessing the credit and managing it necessitate a certain level of literacy and numerical skills. Because the majority of Ugandans, especially women are illiterate, the majority of the people who have benefited from this scheme are those already literate. A number of other rural Savings and Credit Schemes have also been put in place by other agencies. The agencies include, Pride Africa, Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), Sub-county Integrated Development Associations, and Uganda Women Finance and Credit Trust (WFCT).

It is important to note that while lack of access to credit featured as a cause of household poverty in 5 districts involved in UPPAP, local people's awareness of government credit policy, encompassing *Entadikwa* and PAP was marginal (UPPAP 2000:36). In all districts, the idea of *Entadikwa* was hailed as good, but they criticized it as a failure. According to participants, the scheme was plagued by corruption; mismanagement by LCs and intermediaries through which the funds were channeled. Furthermore, poor sensitization and misinformation, among other observations of the scheme's ambitious and over extended scope, in addition to poor implementation significantly contributed to its failure in the eyes of its intended beneficiaries - the poor (UPPAP 2000:37).

In general, local people felt that the credit was available to groups, rich people or those with training and education. Individual women felt particularly at a disadvantage since many were uneducated, did not own property to act as collateral, and were unable to save due to lack of control over household income. Poor people have diverse needs for credit. Therefore a singular credit policy, that is unsupported by other important measures in poverty alleviation (housing, roads, electricity) or an understanding of how poor people save can not by itself adequately cater for all aspects of poverty and credit facility needs.

4.4 Weaknesses in the Policy Framework

Successful policy implementation requires the successive detailing of policy goals from the level of intent through the structuring of actions required to be achieved by the intended policy and its outputs and impacts. In addition, the effectiveness of policies require continual

¹⁴ Report on the Evaluation of the Functional Adult Literacy Programme in Uganda, Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social

monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of policies and actions on environment, the population and the economy as well as to ensure that the policies reach their intended beneficiaries.

General weaknesses observed in relation to the policies examined include, lack of an enforceability element. A policy, however, good, must remain a paper document awaiting legal backing. In cases where the legislative body does not make the appropriate law immediately, the good policy may never be put to use. Law does not yet back the policies discussed in this section.

Another observable weakness identified in the policy framework is lack of coherent linkages amongst the various policies. The basis for these inconsistencies is rooted in the fact that policies are prepared by individual ministries and other government departments, which have specific objectives to achieve. For instance, the Agriculture policy may aim at increasing food production in the country, which would necessitate clearing of large a large acreage of forests. Such a policy would not be implemented if it does not take into account other policies like the Forestry policy and the Decentralization policy, all of which are concerned with poverty eradication. This would come up as a result of lack of direct linkages and synergies between and amongst these policies.

4.5 Government Proposals for Poverty Eradication - 2000/01

Government hopes to include Secondary and vocational education under the Poverty Action Fund. Measures expected to improve education levels in the financial year 2000/2001 include; government bursaries to deserving students in every sub-county. The establishment of 850 community Polytechnics is expected to promote technical and vocational education and training. In addition, the government has set aside Shs 1 billion to support the Adult Literacy Programme in 2001. Government hopes to reduce the level of HIV/AIDS by 35% from 9.5% in 1998 to 6.2% by 2005. Furthermore, the government expects to spend approximately Shs 27 billion for the rehabilitation of 800 Km of feeder roads to improve on rural access to markets.

The proposed improvements in social welfare notwithstanding, it is important to examine how existing poverty measures are viewed from the perspective of the poor.

The next section draws together the main themes of this study - qualitative sources of perceptions on poverty and quantitative sources of different perceptions of poverty in Uganda. It attempts to place these within the context of economic growth, and the reality of persistent poverty based on the views of the poor.

SECTION FIVE

Planning with the Poor : Recommendations for a Pro-poor Poverty Agenda

Men and Women have differentiated access to livelihood resources. Power relations within the household have the potential to constrain earning capacities and to create competition of expenditure. Therefore, it must be remembered that interventions designed to benefit the household may not necessarily benefit female members (UPPAP 2000).

They asked us about coins, and we rejected them, and now they are back. We were asked about the form of government that we preferred decentralization or federal system. We chose the federal system, and now we have decentralization. How can we be sure that the views from this assessment will be taken seriously? (Young Man, Nakulabye, Kampala, UPPAP 200:59)

Who was responsible for decentralization of districts, the district at stake as a partner in the process or the central government single-handed? We woke up one day to hear that Moyo had been decentralized. (Man, Celecelea, Moyo District - UPPAP 2000:45)

5.0 Introduction

Uganda's exemplary economic growth juxtaposed with the lived experiences of poverty among different segments of the population reveals important differences in perception of poverty. This section makes several recommendations based on observed differences in the definitions, conceptualization and methods used to measure poverty.

5.1 Recommendations

Most of the recommendations presented in this section are based on the outcomes of the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment exercise. These recommendations concern problems in the design and implementation of poverty alleviation strategies, in addition to inherent structural (mainly cultural) barriers at the national and local levels that inhibit access to resources and decision-making power. Other recommendations, particularly those related to methodological gaps are derived from the academic literature on the main elements of ongoing conceptual, methodological, and policy debates.

5.1.1 Policy Recommendations

- The participation of recognized social institutions including local elders, Local Councils (LCs) in poverty reduction interventions should be enhanced

- Women should be educated on their rights over land, particularly under the co-ownership of land provisions in the law.
- Local governments should be given more flexibility over use of conditional funds to respond to priority needs for poverty eradication.
- Interventions designed to benefit the household should be designed in such a way as to reflect the different interests and needs within families.
- Invest in new technologies for efficient agricultural production to improve on productivity and increasing household income without increasing women's workload
- Women's access to income that they generate should be legally assured.
- Institute deliberate measures to target vulnerable groups, with the aim of enhancing their inclusion in policy planning and implementation¹⁵.
- The sensitization on HIV infections and AIDS-related conditions should be given priority, particularly in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, safe practices and support for AIDS sufferers should be expanded and extended.
- Health related charges should be regulated and service delivery monitored with a view to providing cost relief to the poor¹⁶.
- Health services (with trained health care workers and health units) should be extended to provide outreach health facilities to under-served areas.

¹⁵ Those who are excluded from the community, either through choice or the action of others, are often the poorest. They often experience different problems and require different kinds of support.

¹⁶ The concerns over how poor people gain access to adequate health facilities and care have recently been overtaken by the changes in policy concerning cost sharing in government hospitals and health facilities.

- Harness the high value placed on education and the positive gains under UPE by improving the quality of education under the UPE programme and linking access to primary education to further education and future employment opportunities.
- Improve access to clean water bearing in mind location specificities, the community realities, and expressed needs of communities.
- Establish lending institutions, particularly in rural areas to improve upon the "poor's" access to credit facilities.
- Improve security situation in different parts of the country to enhance the reach of poverty alleviation programmes.

Key aspects of the above recommendations for planning *with* the poor include: promoting opportunities for the poor to enable them acquire jobs, stimulating economic growth, making markets work better for people, and improving on infrastructure and communication networks.

Conclusion

The remarkable economic record of the NRM government in rescuing the economy following a protracted period of political instability is significant. However, the fact that despite the recorded growth, civil society continues to present poverty as being on the increase suggests that important differences in perceptions of poverty exist.

That the economic accomplishments of government economic reforms have mitigated the adverse effects of policies on the poor in begs the question of why. The discrepancy between macro-economic indicators and prevailing levels of poverty suggests that the process of economic adjustment created both losers and winners. Conversely, it suggests that observed differences in the economic benefits could be attributed to a disjuncture between expectation and reality. Alternatively, the differences could be attributed to conceptual and methodological differences.

This report set out to assess the differences in perceptions of poverty arising from quantitative statistical analyses and the qualitative view of civil society that despite the good economic indicators the poverty situation is worsening. The point of departure for this assessment was that poverty is both a political and economic process whereby economically, meager assets, inaccessible markets, scarce job opportunities, lack of access to credit, and poor infrastructures lock people in material poverty. Powerlessness and vulnerability as important political dimensions of poverty concern the lack of inclusion and control over assets and full and effective in political and economic decision-making. In addition, there are still wide differences between women and men regarding access and control over productive resources, education and training levels, employment opportunities, poverty levels, participation in politics, and access to judicial structures.

Based on the range and limits of different perspectives of poverty, the difficulties associated with measurement methodologies and the results they yield, this study explored the underlying assumptions of various approaches and attempted to assess their contribution to existing differences in perceptions of poverty. The discussion revealed that the way in which poverty is defined and measured could lead to different outcomes. Conversely, the discussion of perspectives of poverty by the poor themselves revealed that from the as illustrated by the voices of the poor, the differences in perceptions of poverty could be attributed to economic policies that have created a dual path to growth creating winners and losers in the process.

In the final analysis, the issue is not about whether adjustment policies have made things better or worse. Rather, the key question is who has become better off and why. Thus, poverty must be conceived as an economic, political, and social process that interact with each other and frequently reinforce each other in ways that exacerbate the deprivation of the poor obviates the limitation of conventional approaches to poverty alleviation. Assumptions that only a small percentage of people are adversely affected by adjustment policies and can therefore be provided with *safety nets*, masks the need for structural changes that go beyond financial provisions. Policies designed to tackle poverty cannot effectively address the problem of poverty unless planners and the beneficiaries of policy revisit structural relations, distributional relationships and the empowerment of people to participate in self determined change and access to resources.

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