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Paper on:
Poverty Measurement in The Gambia
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1 Introduction

The Gambia is a LDC in West Africa with a population of about 1.4 million inhabitants (2003 Population and Housing Census). Its population growth rate is estimated at about 2.8 percent per annum. The crude birth rate is estimated at 46.2 per thousand and the crude death rate is about 11.3 per thousand. The country has a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of about 6.04 per woman. Infant Mortality (IMR) is about 91 per thousand and Maternal Mortality (MMR) is about 730 per 100,000. Life expectancy at birth is about 59 years.

The Gambia is a multi-ethnic society characterised by commonalties and marked differences in social norms and values. Islam and Christianity are the two main religions.

GDP per capita at current prices as at 2003 is estimated at around $167. Agriculture – mainly groundnut production and marketing, Distributive trade and Tourism are the most important industrial activities. Recently, the communications and construction industries have registered significant growth. Marked variations exist in levels of human development and gender relationships across the country.

1.1 The PRSP

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is a statement of commitment of The Gambian people to alleviate poverty. The PRSP or SPA II is a successor to SPA I that was drafted in the early 1990s to eradicate poverty. This was necessitated by the economic and social developments experienced in the 1980s under the ERP and PSD. Generally, this period was characterised by sluggish economic growth and drop in access to quality social services. The SPA I document was the result of broad-base country-wide consultative processes on poverty, its manifestations, causes and means and ways of its eradication/alleviation. The following strategic Pillars were identified:

1) Enhancing the productive capacity of the poor.
2) Enhancing access to and the performance of social services.
3) Local level capacity building.
4) Promoting participatory communication processes.

SPA I ended with its shortcomings in the following areas:

1) Limited scales, scopes and time.
2) Over concentration of government services as well as economic activities.
3) Weak linkages to sectoral policies of government as well as political instability.

The SPA II or PRSP is drawn based on current realities and lessons learnt under SPA I. The PRSP has the following objectives:

a) To create the enabling policy environment to promote economic growth and poverty reduction.
b) To enhance the productive capacity and social protection of the poor and vulnerable.
c) To improve coverage of the basic social service needs of the poor and vulnerable.
d) To build the capacity of local communities and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to play an active role in the process of poverty reduction.
e) To mainstream poverty-related cross-cutting issues into SPA II.

The formulation of SPA I and SPA II (or PRSP) utilised instruments such as the National Dialogue forum, the PPAs, the 1993 and 1998 Household Poverty Surveys as well as sector specific studies. Continuous conducts of poverty studies are therefore called for in order to continually monitor poverty situation as well as monitor and evaluate poverty-related policies and programmes. Furthermore, the monitoring of development goals such as MDGs also requires the availability of poverty and related data.

This call has therefore put the Department of Statistics in The Gambia in the lead seat to put mechanisms in place for the conduct of such studies.

2.0 Poverty Studies conducted by CSD

The department of statistics conducted a number of socio-economic surveys among which is the 1998 National Household Poverty Survey. This survey was a nationwide poverty survey conducted from March to April of 1998. It was commissioned by the Strategy for Poverty Alleviation Coordinating Office (SPACO) and the Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, and was intended to obtain information required for monitoring and analysing poverty and its related characteristics in the Gambia within the framework of the National Poverty Monitoring System.

2.1 Methodology, Concepts, Definitions employed

The survey used two questionnaires to collect a variety of data concerning the demographic, health, education, employment and earnings, anthropometry, among others. A listing form was used to list all households in selected enumeration areas (EA) from which a sample of households was selected for administering of the questionnaires.

The 1998 National Poverty Survey was designed taking cognizant of the principles of survey sampling such as the extent of variation in the population with regards to key characteristics of the study and the population size. In that light and given the resource constraints, the sample size for the survey was set at about 2000 households (about 1.7% of the total households).

The 2000 households were proportionally distributed across the seven Local Government Areas based on sizes of their projected populations. The number of households to be

selected within LGAs were further proportionally distributed across districts. EAs were then proportionally selected within districts and, subsequently, households identified by simple random sampling.

Before the first stage selection, all the EAs were allocated to one of the four population density categories:

Category 1   Greater Banjul
Category 2   Towns – Administrative centres
Category 3   Large Villages (multiple EAs) – Population of more than 1000 persons in the 1993 Census
Category 4   Strictly Rural – All remaining Enumeration Areas

2.1.1 *CONCEPT*
In terms of conceptual approach to determine those persons/groups in society deemed poor, the survey, at the analysis stage, used the basic needs approach. Basic needs may be interpreted in terms of minimum specified quantities of essential goods and services that are necessary to prevent ill health, undernourishment and the like (Streeten and others, 1981, 25). Items of goods and services include food, clothing, shelter, water and sanitation.

The concept of deprivation, according to this approach, is the inadequate fulfillment of some basic needs relating to nutrition, health, education, etc. It specifies a minimum basket of goods and services that fulfills basic needs.

2.1.2 *DEFINITION*
Conceptually, a person is poor if he/she does not have access to (or lacks the capacity of accessing) the given basket of goods, services and rights. The living welfare of a person is determined by his/her position against a poverty line.

2.1.3 *SOCIOECONOMIC GROUPING*
For the analysis of the 1998 Poverty Study, households were categorized by socioeconomic status of the household head. The rationale being that socioeconomic status of the household head to a large extent determines the socioeconomic status of household members.

The criteria used to determine the socioeconomic group in which to locate the household include geographic location, agricultural production and the nature of the work contract of the head of the household.

The following socioeconomic groupings were used:

1) Greater Banjul Public Worker
2) Greater Banjul Private Worker
3) Greater Banjul Informal Worker
4) Other Urban Formal Worker
5) Other Urban Informal Worker
6) Rural Non-Groundnut Farmer

7) Rural Small Groundnut Farmer
8) Rural Medium Groundnut Farmer
9) Rural Large Groundnut Farmer
10) Rural Non-Groundnut Non-Farmer
11) Not in the Workforce

The table below gives information on distribution of households across socioeconomic groups and other household characteristics.

Table 1: Distribution of Households across Socioeconomic Group and other Household Characteristics

| | Greater Banjul | | | Other Urban | | Rural | | | | | | All SEGs |
	Public Workers	Private Workers	Informal Workers	Formal Workers	Informal Workers	Non G'nut Farm-ers	Small G'nut Farm-ers	Medium G'nut Farm-ers	Large G'nut Farm-ers	Non Farm Work-ers	Not in the Work force	
No. of Households	102	97	411	39	214	141	244	187	52	262	283	2034
No. of Persons	679	583	2346	356	1354	998	2363	1995	824	1930	2153	15597
Average Household Size	7	6	6	8	7	7	10	11	16	7	8	8
Percentage Female Heads	20	15	22	2	16	25	6	2	0	9	37	17

Source: 1998 National Household Poverty Survey Report.

2.1.4 *POVERTY LINE*
The 1998 NHPS adopted the absolute approach that classifies a household as poor if its consumption level is insufficient to acquire a given level of goods and services regarded as essential for a minimum standard of living. Households whose values of consumption fall below the poverty line are classified as poor and those above it as non-poor. The poverty line is therefore given a monetary value. However, analysis of the 1998 NHPS, like previous poverty studies in The Gambia, went further to set two poverty lines: food and non-food poor. Such conceptualisation rendered the information useful for analysis of food security and access to social services – essential thematic issues not just for poverty alleviation but for overall developmental discourse. *Households whose consumption values fall below the food poverty line are classified as extremely poor and those with consumption value above the food poverty line but below the overall poverty line as poor and those above the overall poverty line as non-poor.*

2.1.4.1 *COMPOSITION OF BASKET*

Food Basket:
The WHO recommended 2700 calories for Adult Equivalent Unit is employed as a basis in the setting up of the food poverty line. The Nutrition Unit of DOSH help identified common Gambian food items and their unit calorific values per Kg. Monetary values of quantities consumed daily of the different food items were calculated using the CPI and other prices and subsequently monthly expenditures imputed.

The composition of the Gambian population in terms of sex and age were used to arrive at adult equivalent units of different age and sex cohorts. Such weighting addressed differentials in sex and age composition of households.

Table 2 below gives information of Adult Equivalent Units by age/sex differentials.

Table 2: Calculation of Adult Equivalent Units

Gender	Age	Energy Nee d Kcal/Day	Adult Equivalent
Both	0-6 (months)	690	0.26
	6-12 (months)	945	0.35
	1-3	1300	0.48
	4-6	1700	0.63
	7-10	2400	0.89
Male	11-14	2700	1.00
	15-18	2800	1.04
	19-22	2900	1.07
	23-50	2700	1.00
	51-75	2400	0.89
	76+	2050	0.76
Female	11-14	2200	0.81
	15-18	2100	0.78
	19-22	2100	0.78
	23-50	2000	0.74
	51-75	1800	0.67
	76+	1600	0.59

As quoted in 1998 NHPS: Source on energy requirements: Recommended Dietary Allowances, Ninth Revised Edition, 1980. Committee on Dietary Allowances, Food and Nutrition Board, National Academy of Sciences, Washington DC, 1980.

The Gambia's food basket have been carefully chosen bearing in mind items that can provide healthy diet at a relatively low cost and reflecting the relative perceptions of living standa rds in the society as a whole rather than any scientifically based criteria. Expensive items that can be substituted by cheaper items have therefore been excluded from the basket. The composition of the 1998 food basket is the same as that of the1992 HES and it is valued using prices from the 1998 Price Survey and the CPI. See Table 3.

Table 3: Valuing the 1998 Food Poverty Line for The Gambia

Food Item	Energy Calories	Conversion Kcal/gram	Quantity Gram/Day	Price in dalasis			Monthly Cost of Food Basket in Dalasis		
				Greater Banjul	Other Urban	Rural	Greater Banjul	Other Urban	Rural
Rice	830.3	3.8	219	4.4	4.4	5.5	30	30	37
Fish	109.2	0.8	137	2.0	2.0	1.0	8	8	4
Groundnut	708.0	5.7	124	8.8	8.8	7.7	34	34	30
Vegetables	36.2	0.7	52	6.7	4.1	3.5	11	7	6
Sugar	109.0	3.8	29	6.6	6.6	6.6	6	6	6
Milk	71.5	0.8	89	27.5	22.0	22.0	76	61	61

Snacks	135.8	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	18	16	16
Total for Adult Female	**2000**	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	**183**	**162**	**160**
Total for Adult Male	**2700**	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	**247**	**218**	**215**
Total Per AEU Per Year	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	**2963.7**	**2610.2**	**2576**

Note: For vegetables, price and conversion factor for sorrel (bisap leaves was used.
Price of fresh bonga has been used for fish.
Snacks were defined as 10 percent of the total cost of the food basket (as per the ILO and HES studies).
Conversion factors from GAFNA have been used for Gambian foods and Rice from the International Standard, Nutrition Unit, DOSH, The Gambia.
Source: Quoted from the 1998 NHPS Report.

Non-Food Basket:

The survey valued the non-food basket on the assumption that the extremely poor households who do not have enough resources to buy even the basic minimum food basket spend some money on non-food items.

To establish the non-food poverty line for The Gambia, the assumption was that the minimum non-food basket should be at a level between the non-food consumption of the extremely poor and that of the next higher expenditure group (i.e. the class of 25 per cent above the food poverty line). The mean expenditure on the selected basic non-food items of these households in each urban category was used as the non-food poverty line. Table 4 gives information on distribution of non-food expenditures by area categories. It is noteworthy that expenditure on firewood is higher for other urban and rural areas than the Greater Banjul Area. One explanation could be that households in these areas often collect firewood (which could be regarded as "free") and could therefore be using more than is necessary.

Table 4: Distribution of Non-Food Expenditure by Item and Urban Category

Item	Greater Banjul		Other Urban		Rural	
	Proportion	Expenditure	Proportion	Expenditure	Proportion	Expenditure
Rent	0.469	108.3	0.324	36.7	0.189	8.7
Clothing	0.150	34.7	0.183	20.7	0.250	11.5
Firewood	0.052	12.2	0.231	26.2	0.236	10.9
Transport	0.219	50.6	0.116	13.2	0.160	7.4
Education	0.077	17.8	0.105	11.9	0.110	5.1
Health	0.032	7.4	0.039	4.5	0.050	2.3
Total per month		231.0		113.0		46.0
Total per year		2772.0		1356.0		552.0

The values of the annual non-food baskets were calculated for the different urban categories using the consumer price indexes for 1998. The values arrived at were D2575.1 per AEU, D1287.98 per AEU and D511.72 per AEU for Greater Banjul, other Urban and rural areas respectively

2.1.4.2 *The Overall Poverty Line*

The overall poverty line is the sum of the food and non-food poverty lines. This was estimated at D5538.78 per AEU per annum in the Greater Banjul Area, D3898.15 per AEU per annum in other Urban areas and D3087.55 per AEU in Rural areas.

2.2 Results

The following are some of the key findings:

❖ In The Gambia, the poor constitute 55 per cent of households and 69 per cent of the population. A significant proportion of households (37%) and persons (51%) are extremely poor, meaning that they lack the minimum amount of income required to sustain a minimum standard of living.

❖ Over half of the children in the country live in poverty, with the majority residing in the rural areas.

❖ Poverty has increased considerably – about 52 per cent overall – between 1992 and 1998 when two poverty surveys were conducted, with farming households bearing the brunt of this increase.

❖ Wide variations exist in the incidence of poverty between household and persons in different geographical locations with 60 per cent incidence in the rural areas, compared to 13 per cent in Greater Banjul and 28 per cent in other urban areas.

❖ Two thirds of all households in Lower River Division are extremely poor, as are 73 per cent of people in Upper River Division.

❖ Households engaged in medium and large-scale groundnut production in rural Gambia have the highest incidence of poverty among all socio-economic groups at 85 and 80 per cent respectively.

❖ In the Greater Banjul area, households with heads working in the informal sector are the poorest socio-economic group.

❖ Although poverty is lower among female headed households, women – in particular, poor women – consistently fare worse than their male counterparts in all spheres of human development.

❖ Households in the highest quintile have incomes 13.8 times that of the lowest income quintile, translating into a high level of inequality, particularly in the Greater Banjul area.

❖ Average household size is still high.

❖ Poor households in The Gambia spend more than two thirds of their income on food, most of it on staples such as rice and other cereals.

❖ Most poor persons are economically active in the Agriculture and Fisheries sub-sector where average incomes are invariably the lowest across all industry categories.

❖ Average earnings of men are consistently higher than those of women regardless of poverty status and type of occupation.

❖ Child labour is widespread especially among extremely poor households, with a higher proportion of girls than boys engaged in some form of economic activity.

❖ Non-farm enterprises, as a concrete attempt to diversify income sources, are predominantly operated by the non-poor although a substantial proportion of extremely poor households are also engaged in such activities.

❖ In general, the nutritional status of children in extremely poor households is worse than that of their counterparts in the other poverty categories.

❖ A mother's years of education is positively related to the nutritional status of her children.

❖ Enrolment at the primary cycle clearly indicates a bias in favour of the non-poor and those residing in the urban areas.

❖ Although female enrolment rates are higher than those of males at the primary level, this scenario is reversed at the secondary level.

❖ Average annual household expenditure on education is highest for non-poor households and households in the urban areas.

❖ A little over one quarter of persons 15 years and above are literate, with females accounting for one third of this proportion.

❖ Poverty category notwithstanding, the higher one's educational level, the higher the level of earnings.

❖ Those parents (especially from the extremely poor category) who send their children to madrassah, as opposed to western system of schools, do so primarily for religious reasons.

❖ Most poor households, particularly in the rural areas, depend on wells for their drinking water and pit latrines for sanitary purposes.

❖ Electricity as a main source of lighting is the preserve of urban and non-poor households.

❖ Ownership of assets by extremely poor and rural households is low relative to their better off counterparts from non-poor and urban households.

❖ Past macroeconomic policies have not favoured the poor, especially those in the rural areas of the country, with the agricultural sector being particularly hard hit by the removal of subsidies and low world market prices for the country's major foreign exchange earner – groundnuts.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Persons in Poverty Categories by Socioeconomic Group, 1992 and 1998

Year and Poverty Category	Greater Banjul			Other Urban		Rural						All SEGs
	Public Workers	Private Workers	Informal Workers	Formal Workers	Informal Workers	Non G'nut Farm-ers	Small G'nut Farm-ers	Medium G'nut Farm-ers	Large G'nut Farm-ers	Non Farm Work-ers	Not in the Work force	
1992												
Extremely Poor	6	1	2	11	0	19	16	26	36	11	16	15
Poor	19	4	2	29	30	22	15	8	26	22	12	18
Non Poor	74	95	96	60	70	59	70	65	38	67	73	67
All Persons	667	763	2165	242	1082	1364	1418	1063	1430	965	1032	12192
1998												
Extremely Poor	13	13	24	38	42	62	74	77	70	62	39	51
Poor	29	36	36	24	20	11	9	8	10	10	22	18
Non Poor	59	51	40	39	38	27	17	15	19	28	38	31
All Persons	678	539	2359	298	1435	989	2289	2132	904	1894	2089	15612

Source: 1998 National Household Poverty Survey Report.

Table 6: Average Number of Persons per Household by Urban and Poverty Categories and Socioeconomic Group – 1998

Poverty Category	Greater Banjul			Other Urban		Rural						All SEGs
	Public Workers	Private Workers	Informal Workers	Formal Workers	Informal Workers	Non G'nut Farm-ers	Small G'nut Farm-ers	Medium G'nut Farm-ers	Large G'nut Farm-ers	Non Farm Work-ers	Not in the Work force	
Extremely Poor	10	16	10	13	10	10	11	11	16	8	9	11
Poor	10	8	7	10	7	7	8	9	17	10	8	8
Non Poor	6	5	4	5	4	4	7	9	11	5	5	5
Total	7	6	6	8	7	7	10	11	15	7	6	8

Source: 1998 National Household Poverty Survey Report.

2.3 Other Quantitative Studies carried out in The Gambia

Other household surveys carried out in The Gambia in the last decade includes the following:

1) ILO study
2) 1993 Household Economic Survey
3) The Action Aid Survey

The Action Aid Study corroborated the 1993 Household Poverty Report in localising extreme poverty in URD, CRD and LRD and points to the fact that internalisation and sustainability of projects/programmes after donor funding is a problem.

The different types of surveys/studies further highlight the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and underscore the importance of standardisation of concepts and definitions at the national level without loosing sight of international recommendations and classifications for international comparison. Adoption and usage of standard definitions and classifications as well as survey design will enhance utility of different datasets for poverty monitoring and evaluation.

3   Conclusion and Recommendations

Due to the nature of poverty and its changing form over space and time, poverty measurement instruments are to be continuously reviewed and developed. Poverty measurement studies should be conducted using appropriate instruments and survey design. Allocation of sufficient resources for the conduct of poverty surveys should not be downplayed.

Proper mechanisms should be put in place that would ensure that capacity is built both in terms of human resource and equipment as well as putting in place a sustainable household survey programme.