



RURAL STATISTICS: CURRENT GAPS AND IMPROVEMENT PERSPECTIVES

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Rural Statistics

Why rural stats are needed?

Widespread and persistent rural poverty in developing countries

Likelihood of being poor more than 2.5 times larger for rural populations than for people living in cities

This disadvantage reflect largely the following well-known challenges:

- Strong reliance on the natural resource base to sustain livelihoods
 - high vulnerability to climate change, animal/plant diseases, price fluctuations, seasonal food supply; limited growth opportunities
- Low population density and geographic constraints
 - high transaction costs and reduced access to infrastructure & social services
- Low population growth and youth migration
 - Reduced income generation opportunities and reduced resilience
- Informal labour market and informal economy
 - difficult to provide targeted support and social protection
- Weak institutions and community organization
 - limited voice in national and local decision-making processes.

Recent efforts in producing international rural stats

- **WB: “Rural Development Indicators” (2000)**
Follow-up to “Rural Development: From Vision to Action” (World Bank, 1997)
Providing the framework for systematic monitoring rural development progress.
- **WB-FAO: “Tracking results in agriculture and rural development in less-than-ideal conditions” (2008)**
Defining a M&E system for agriculture and rural development activities, it provides a menu of 86 core results level indicators which have been tested and validated in five developing countries with difficult statistical conditions
- **Wye City Group on Statistics on Rural Development and Agricultural Household Income**
Active from 2008 to 2012. Two Handbooks on the Measurement of Income and Rural Livelihood produced
- **Global Strategy to improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics**
Main objective: Integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions
- **FAO Rural Livelihood Monitor (work in progress)**
M&E framework of the new FAO Strategic Framework, in particular Objective 3 = Rural Poverty Reduction

WB Rural Development Indicators

- **Six Dimensions**
 1. Rural Well-being
 2. Improvement In Rural Economy
 3. Development of Rural Markets
 4. Improvement of Accessibility & Communication
 5. Sustainable Management of the Natural Resources Base
 6. Policy and Institutional Framework
- **For each dimension from 4 to 11 indicators (48 ind. in total)**
- **Rural Score Card = composite indicator to be used to assess an overall progress in achieving rural well-being**

HOWEVER

- **Many indicators not disaggregated by urban/rural areas**
- **Many data gaps**
- **Situation not substantially improved in 14 years**

RURAL WELL-BEING

1. Population below the poverty line (% rural)
 2. Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)
 3. Safe water, rural (% of rural population with access)
 4. Sanitation, rural (% of rural population with access)
 - * 5. School enrolment, primary (% gross)
 - * 6. School enrolment, primary male (% gross)
 - * 7. School enrolment, primary female (% gross)
 - * 8. Per capita dietary energy supply (calories)
 - * 9. Malnutrition prevalence (% of children under 5)
 - * 10. Youth illiteracy rate (% 15-24)
 - * 11. Illiteracy rate, adult female (% of female 15 +)
- * = Rural breakdown needed, but in the absence of data, only the national aggregates are shown

1. Lack of an international standard definition of rural areas
 - Extreme variability of national definitions
 - OECD definition as the only international definition currently used (criteria = population density, distribution and size).
2. Surveys not collecting information on rural areas
3. Survey estimates of rural variables not statistically representative
 - Rural area not planned as a separate domain in the sampling design
4. Domain specific (not integrated) data sources (both farm and HH surveys as well as administrative data) = need to mix data from different sources that may differ in definitions, coverage, measurement period and periodicity
5. Non reliability of administrative data

An international agenda

1. Start a process within the UNSC to reach a consensus for an international standard definition of rural areas and a minimum set of core indicators

International standard definition can coexist with national definitions

Beyond urban/rural distinction: gradient of rurality

Platform = IAEG on Agricultural and Rural Statistics

2. Promote geo-referencing of all data collections
3. Promote the integration of the Agricultural Census with the Population Census (=> FAO guidelines).
Relevant for countries where agricultural production is mainly based on the household sector
4. Promote a flexible and integrated survey programme through advocacy, training, technical assistance and financial support (=> Global Strategy)

Technical proposals to improve rural stats

- Introduce rural area as a planned domain in the sampling design in order to produce separate estimates
- Increase the sample size of rural areas (trade-off: slight increase in the sampling error of estimates for urban areas)
- Cumulate data over time to produce direct estimates as (moving) averages of multiannual estimates (e.g. Continuous Pop. Census)
- Collect integrated data (ISF of the Global strategy) by:
 - Including a module on agricultural farms in the HH survey (LSMS-ISA)
 - Including a module on rural livelihood in farm survey
 - Adopting integrated system of HH surveys (Brazil)
- Apply small area estimation techniques using auxiliary variables from administrative sources (GS research program)
- Ex-post integration of different domain-specific surveys through imputation or a model-based approach (GS research program)

Thank you for your attention
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