

## Governance and poverty eradication policy performance during the NRM<sup>1</sup> Administration in Uganda 1986 – 2020

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### ABSTRACT

Poverty in Uganda is attributed to diseases, limited access to land, large families, lack of markets for agricultural produce, lack of credit facilities, lack of education and vocational training, lack of jobs, high unfair taxes and market dues, death of family bread winners, ignorance and lack of information, idleness and laziness, insurgency and gender inequalities among others. This is the identifiable poverty structural complex within which any actor on poverty reduction and eradication has to work. However, despite the above elaborate classification of the causes of poverty in Uganda and the enactment of numerous anti-poverty policies, less effort has been expended in analyzing why the poverty situation in Uganda has not significantly changed since the NRM administration.

This study therefore attempted inter alia to fill this research gap and also sought to introduce new concepts that can improve poverty reduction and eradication agenda in Uganda. The idea behind this research is that if the causes of the slow progress in poverty reduction are not identified and targeted holistically through policy and inculcation of good governance at all levels of government administration, it will be difficult for Uganda to achieve significant poverty reduction and eradication in the long run. Consequently therefore, the main objective of the study was to establish whether or not a relationship exists between governance and anti-poverty policy performance in Uganda and to generate governance practices that can be applied for better anti-poverty policy performance in Uganda in the future. Following on this objective it is hypothesized that a possible relationship exists between governance practices at all levels of government administration and poverty reduction so much so that particular governance practices are crucial in poverty reduction. A mixed research methodology was adopted in the study and a number of questions were adopted to assist in probing this hypothesis.

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### Introduction

“African leaders face a major challenge: lifting millions of people from poverty. This cannot be achieved without strong democratic societies; the functioning rule of law; the provision of health and educational facilities; an empowered civil society; and a framework conducive to strong economic growth. In other words, none of this can be achieved without good governance. Nothing, simply nothing, is more important for Africa than good governance” Mo Ibrahim.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>NRM stands for National Resistance Movement which has been the ruling political party in Uganda since 1986. It started as a ruling group in 1986 and as formalized into a political party in 2002.

According to Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS)<sup>3</sup>, the population living under extreme poverty in Uganda in the decades stretching from 1986 stood at 56.4% in 1992, 44% in 1997, 35% in 2000, 38% in 2003, 35% in 2005, 24.5% in 2009, 19.7% in 2013 and 21.4% in 2018 respectively. Uganda uses the World Bank income index to categorize the extreme poverty. However, in spite of all these elaborate government statistics on poverty reduction, there has been no consensus on their true depiction of poverty prevalence (Uganda National NGO Forum, 2001). Many arguments have been raised concerning the non-application of multidimensional measure of poverty to capture its different forms. Nonetheless, the development and application of a more multidimensional measure as suggested by Townsend (2006) and Vranken (2001) could result in a different poverty figure and certainly in a different poverty prevalence picture in terms of the incidence of poverty in different rural and urban surroundings, for different population groups, for different household types and for people engaged in different economic activities. Conceptualizing and then defining poverty in the above manner represents the multidimensionality of poverty and this is useful in any anti-poverty agenda.

Many researchers have attributed poverty in Uganda to diseases, limited access to land, large families, lack of markets for agricultural produce, lack of credit facilities, lack of education and vocational training, lack of jobs, high unfair taxes and market dues, death of family members particularly bread winners, ignorance and lack of information, idleness and laziness, insurgency in some parts of the country, and gender inequalities among others (MFPED, 2002). This is the identifiable poverty structural complex within which any actor on poverty reduction and eradication has to work. However, despite the above elaborate classification of the causes of poverty in Uganda and the enactment of numerous anti-poverty policies, less effort has been expended in analyzing why the poverty situation in Uganda has not significantly changed over the years of NRM administration.

This study therefore attempted *inter alia* to fill this research gap and also sought to introduce new concepts that can improve poverty eradication policy management right from the formulation stage through the implementation stage and up to the evaluation stage. The idea behind this research was that if the causes of the slow progress in poverty reduction are not identified and targeted holistically through policy and inculcation of good governance at all levels of government administration, it was difficult for Uganda to achieve the MDGs, especially the topmost one of halving poverty by 2015 and the subsequent SDGs that replaced the MDGs from 2015 onwards. The 17 SDGs were agreed upon by world leaders with the aim of creating a better and fairer world by 2030. Consequently therefore, the main objective of the study was to establish whether or not a relationship exists between governance and anti-poverty policy performance in Uganda and to generate governance practices that can be applied for better policy performance in Uganda. Following on this objective it was hypothesized that a possible relationship exists between governance practices at all levels of government administration and poverty reduction policy performance so much so that particular governance practices are crucial in poverty reduction. A mixed research methodology was adopted and a number of questions were adopted to assist in probing this hypothesis. The questions were six in number as follows:

<sup>2</sup>Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2007, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, London. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) was established in 2006 as a tool that measures and monitors governance performance in African countries [www.moibrahimfoundation.org].

<sup>3</sup>The Uganda Bureau of Statistics is an agency of the Ugandan government. Formed by an Act of Parliament in 1998, the agency is mandated to coordinate, monitor and supervise Uganda's National Statistical System.

<sup>4</sup>Extreme poverty is measured as the number of people living on less than \$1.90 per day. [https://www.worldbank.org/en/understanding-poverty,09/01/2023]

1. How do the main actors in poverty eradication policy-making in Uganda define governance?
2. To what level is governance in Uganda of good quality?
3. Is there a relationship between quality of governance and anti-poverty policy performance?
4. Which particular governance practices are required in Uganda for poverty eradication to be speeded up?
5. At what level of government administration: supranational, national and local is more good governance required for better poverty policy management?
6. What level of policy management, formulation, implementation and evaluation, is good governance most required for better poverty policy performance?

This study sought to contribute to the acceleration of poverty reduction in Uganda by identifying the causes of the slow pace of poverty reduction in the country despite all the good-sounding policies formulated and implemented since 1986, and by recommending remedial strategies. The research basically aimed at collecting data on the nature and impact of policy design and governance on poverty eradication policy outcomes in Uganda. The category of persons that comprised the survey population was drawn from government and non-government institutions at national and district levels. Three districts were chosen as cases to represent the whole country and Kampala city was chosen to gather views from central government institutions as well as national and international organisations. Stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the three districts representing good, moderate and poor performance in poverty reduction as well as the four regions of the country. As such Bushenyi district represented the first poverty reduction category as well as Western region, Kamuli represented the second category in addition to representing Eastern and Central regions and Arua represented both the third category and Northern region respectively. Kampala city was chosen because it is the seat of the national government and national NGOs and international organisations that were part of the study population.

### The Role of Governance in Poverty Eradication

The data on the relationship between governance and poverty reduction was gathered using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Below, I present the quantitative results of the study and use the qualitative results to examine more closely all the issues raised by way of triangulation.

The statistical tables below show a quantitative analysis of the respondents' views on whether good governance has a role to play in increasing success for poverty eradication policies and the extent of observance of good governance in Uganda's poverty eradication campaign.

**Table 1.1:** The role of governance at all levels in poverty eradication.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about poverty eradication efforts and governance in Uganda?	Percentage response					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agreement
Good governance in a country at all levels of administration (national, district, sub-county, parish and village) involves creating a governing system that is transparent, accountable, just, fair, democratic, participatory and responsive to peoples' needs	78	17	0	5	0	95
Good governance at all levels of government operation is an important factor in achieving sustainable development in a country including achieving faster poverty reduction	61	38	0	2	0	99
It is true that Uganda is well endowed with resources and that if well managed, enough wealth to lift millions of citizens out of poverty can be created	61	35	2	2	0	96
It is true to blame lack of good governance other than lack of resources for the persisting poverty situation in Uganda	46	35	9	9	1	81

From the table above, it is clear that all people in Uganda generally agree on the meaning of good governance and also regard good governance as a crucial ingredient in facilitating better poverty eradication policy outcomes. Going by responses per district as shown in Table 1.2 below, there was not much difference in the results. All people tended to agree on the meaning and role of governance in poverty eradication irrespective of their different roles and location.

**Table 1.2:** Respondents results by districts on the role of governance in poverty eradication.

<b>To what extent do you agree that good governance in a country at all levels of administration (national, district, sub-county, parish and village) is vital for accelerating poverty eradication in Uganda</b>						
	<b>Percentage Response</b>					
<b>District/City</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Bushenyi</b>	31	23	1	0	0	55
	56.36	41.82	1.82	0.00	0.00	100.00
	31.00	47.92	50.00	0.00	0.00	36.67
<b>Kamuli</b>	24	11	0	0	0	35
	68.57	31.43	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	24.00	22.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.33
<b>Arua</b>	18	8	1	0	0	27
	66.67	29.63	3.70	0.00	0.00	100.00
	18.00	16.67	50.00	0.00	0.00	18.00
<b>Kampala</b>	27	6	0	0	0	33
	81.82	18.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	27.00	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.00
<b>Total</b>	100	48	2	0	0	150
	66.67	32.00	1.33	0.00	0.00	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00

From the table above, all districts agreed that good governance is vital for development including accelerating poverty reduction. Respondents in Kamuli and Kampala districts agreed wholesomely by 100% and Bushenyi and Arua districts agreed by 97%. All respondents irrespective of their category and geographical location perceive the importance of good governance in poverty eradication policy-making in the same way. Consensus on the importance of good governance on poverty eradication policies was undoubted as illustrated by information in the above tables. The data collected by qualitative means was also highly in favour of the hypothesis. Using both sets of data, it is true to say that over 90% of stakeholders in Uganda's poverty eradication policy have undoubted belief about what good governance can do to increase the pace of poverty eradication in Uganda. However, the level of observance of good governance principles in Uganda's poverty eradication policies as shown in Tables 1.3 and 1.4 is still weak.

**Table 1.3:** The extent to which Uganda generally followed good governance in its poverty eradication policies.

To what extent has the government of Uganda generally observed the following tenets/principles of good governance at all levels of public administration in its anti-poverty policy making processes (formulation, implementation and evaluation)?	Percentage response					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agreement
Establishment of a political environment anchored on democratic principles that was conducive for efficient and effective stakeholder participation in all anti-poverty policy making processes i.e. involvement of all stakeholders (citizens both rich and poor, civic organizations, donors, interest groups, opposition parties, private sector organizations and NGOs) in decision making and all processes of anti poverty policy management.	17	38	11	26	8	55
Ensuring equality before the law for all stakeholders in poverty eradication policies.	6	31	16	35	12	37
Ensuring that decisions are arrived at through consensus building among all stakeholders.	9	37	12	32	10	46
Ensuring that anti-poverty policies provide equality in sharing public resources by all citizens (both poor and the rich).	11	27	9	38	15	38
Entrenchment of responsible/accountable financial management procedures that limits misuse of public resources.	11	35	9	31	13	46
Adherence to transparency and accountability mechanisms.	9	34	14	31	12	43
Establishment of a strong ethical culture for citizens and public officers alike, that ensures effective and efficient poverty eradication outcomes by eliminating all forms of corruption in public services.	10	30	14	36	10	40
Ensuring that capacity-building was undertaken for citizens to improve their knowledge and resource bases for poverty eradication, irrespective of their social, economic and political positions in society and geographical location	11	40	19	21	9	51
Uganda would have achieved greater poverty reduction if good governance practices were better from 1986 onwards.	33	52	8	6	1	85

**Table 1.4:** The observance of good governance in Uganda's poverty eradication policy-making by district.

<b>To what extent do you agree that it is true to blame lack of good governance other than lack of resources for the persisting poverty situation in Uganda?</b>						
District	Percentage Response					Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
<b>Bushenyi</b>	23	23	5	4	0	55
	41.82	41.82	9.09	7.27	0.00	100.00
	29.87	54.76	31.25	33.33	0.00	36.67
<b>Kamuli</b>	20	7	3	4	1	35
	57.14	20.00	8.57	11.33	2.86	100.00
	25.97	16.67	18.75	33.33	33.33	23.33
<b>Arua</b>	15	3	5	2	2	27
	55.56	11.11	18.52	7.41	7.41	100.00
	19.48	7.14	31.25	16.67	66.67	18.00
<b>Kampala</b>	19	9	3	2	0	33
	57.58	27.27	9.09	6.06	0.00	100.00
	24.68	21.43	18.75	16.67	0.00	22.00
<b>Total</b>	77	42	16	12	3	150
	51.33	28.00	10.67	8.00	2.00	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

All district reported that the observance of good governance in Uganda from 1986 onwards was poor. Arua district was the least with 68% of respondents blaming poor governance on the poverty situation in Uganda and Kampala district the highest with 86%. By generalizing all the quantitative and qualitative data, 22% of all respondents were of the opinion that the government of Uganda observed good governance in its poverty eradication policies compared to 77.6% that disagreed. Thus we conclude that the problem of poor governance reigns high on factors affecting poverty eradication progress in Uganda.

Many instances of maladministration were reported but most especially corruption in service delivery both at national and local government levels. To many people, Uganda is endowed with enough resources to lift its citizens out of poverty if such resources are well managed. When the question was put in another way to rank lack of good governance and lack of resources as responsible for the persistent poverty situation in Uganda, over 80% of the respondents, put the blame on lack of good governance as over 90% stated that Uganda is well endowed with resources which can lift its population out of poverty if well managed. The following quotes from respondents sum up the feelings of Ugandans on good governance and poverty eradication.

One government minister expressed as follows:

Various forms of corruption are taking their toll on the body politic of our nation. They are manifested in poor service delivery, deterring of potential investors, killing of initiative, and decimation of our national soul and identity. Yet these are the engine of any nation's revival, renaissance as well as development. The form of corruption that is very much in the news is stealing of public resources. It is estimated that 80% of public officials own properties which they have acquired by using public funds.

The New Vision, one of Uganda's leading daily newspapers and government owned described the spectre of poor governance and its impact on poverty reduction policies in its editorial of 15th January 2009 as follows:

Corruption holds back poverty eradication. In the global scheme of things, turning Uganda around does not take much money if the environment was right for investors, both local and foreign. That we continue to flounder like a blind man in the dark year after year content with single digit growth is a scandal. The government should fight poverty by turning its guns on corruption. Corruption frustrates investors thus slowing job creation and emphasizing income equalities as the dream of poverty eradication recedes into the distant future. A poor country is an unstable country, so if for nothing else, let us recognize that corruption heightens insecurity and give it the attention it deserves.

A respondent who is a media consultant summarized Uganda's poverty eradication challenges in the following words:

Which way Uganda? The choices are stark. Either we go the way of integrity in governance or enjoy the short term benefits of degenerate governance and social existence while slowly but surely knotting the rope by which the country will hang itself. Corruption with all its facets; financial impropriety, lack of political accountability, personal indiscipline and social unconsciousness manifests itself fairly strongly in just about every aspect of Ugandan public administration.

Another respondent from the international development organization operating in Uganda had this to say:

Ugandans as a people may be poor, but Uganda as a country is fantastically rich in fertile lands, minerals, forest and water resources, labour and conducive climatic conditions. Almost every Ugandan I have met who is not in government blames corrupt leaders for their plight. The gap between the rich and the poor is still growing. Uganda is not poor, it is poorly managed and governed.

A respondent from one of the national NGOs stated that:

Resources are not an issue at all in Uganda's development aspirations. Most resources are idle and the few that are exploited do not help the citizens due to corruption. Poor management of national resources is the biggest problem to Uganda's poverty eradication crusade.

A practitioner from a civil society engaged in policy advocacy in Uganda summed governance status in Uganda as follows:

Government is not helping the anti-corruption fight. Corruption in Uganda has become so endemic yet its fight is becoming more elusive. The vice has robbed citizens of their potential and aspirations for better education, healthcare, housing, food, water and other necessities. It is about time tough talk was accompanied by tough action.

A respondent in Kampala expressed as follows:

Hundreds of citizens are dying daily in Uganda due to lack of drugs that are stolen from public health units, mothers are dying during childbirth because the roads are impassable, thousands of lives have been lost to road accidents which are purely as a result of corruption. Corruption has increased because the corrupt have been tolerated and those who fight the vice have been demoralized. We have talked about the vice without much action.

When asked about the problem of poverty eradication process in Uganda, a diplomat in one of the foreign embassies replied:

Uganda has received substantial amount of development aid but this has not helped to eradicate poverty because of the absence of good governance. For example, due to high level of corruption in service delivery, a family must pay on average 30% more to be connected to the network of portable water and a lot of donor and local revenues for health, education and road sectors have been lost in many forms of corruption. Without true progress made in terms of good governance, the generosity of European countries to Uganda is unnecessary.

The above selected responses from the field research are but a sample of the tone of most respondents concerning the state of governance in Uganda and its impact on poverty eradication policies.



From the quantitative data expressed in Table 1.2 above and the qualitative responses expressed in the quotations above, it is clear that poverty eradication policies in Uganda have been hampered greatly by poor governance mechanisms, the most severe of which is corruption. Poor governance in service delivery in Uganda is further exemplified by the statement of one of the committee members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Uganda parliament<sup>5</sup>.

About 3.2 billion shillings lost under NAADs programme have been recovered from the culprit districts. It seems clear from our investigations that NAADs is one of the most abused government programmes. This was a well-intentioned programme aimed at poverty reduction through increased household incomes, commercialization of agriculture and food security. However, since its inception in 2001, it has failed to achieve its objectives due to corruption. In a meeting with Public Accounts Committee (PAC) two months ago, none of the CAOs from the 80 districts was able to provide satisfactory accountability of the NAADs funds.

Having analyzed the role of good governance in fostering effective poverty eradication policies, I wanted to analyze this relationship further using other data analysis techniques. By use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r_{xy}$ ), the correlation coefficient (0.477) indicates that the respondents think that there is a moderate positive relationship between good governance and poverty eradication policy performance and since the Pearson's assumption significance (0.000) is less than 0.01, this relationship is significant at 1% level of significance. Using this approach would therefore to some extent improve the performance of the poverty eradication policies.

On the other hand, the results of the Chi-square Tests of Association illustrated a similar relationship. The Chi-square assumption significance (0.000) was less than 0.05 and therefore a 5% level of significance. The results therefore make us to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between good governance and performance of poverty eradication policies in Uganda at 5% level of significance.

Both approaches confirm that the questionnaire respondents agreed with the hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between good governance and the performance of poverty eradication policies in Uganda. This result is further strengthened by various secondary data sources explained in the paragraphs below.

The responsibility for reducing and eradicating poverty lies squarely on the shoulders of all members and organizations present in any given society. However, government plays a central role in ensuring that efforts of all stakeholders result into policies and programmes geared at strengthening the abilities of its citizens to produce enough resources for domestic and commercial purposes and to participate in making decisions on all issues affecting their well being. The role of government is therefore to create a policy framework for rapid economic growth and structural transformation, to ensure good governance and security, and to increase the ability of the poor to raise their incomes, thereby improving their quality of life. However, many development economists believe that establishing a holistic policy approach and ensuring a good governance system are paramount if the efforts of government to reduce poverty are

<sup>5</sup>PAC is one of the oversight committees of Parliament whose task is to ensure accountability of public funds by public sector agencies (ministries, parastatal organizations, districts and municipalities). Excerpt obtained from the records of the 9th Parliament of Uganda 2011 – 2016.



to succeed. For example, Nkurunziza (2005) asserted that one of the reasons why poverty persists in Africa is the failure of some African governments to modernize their political institutions through the adoption of good governance principles. Nkurunziza further noted that due to poor governance, Africa has the highest level of poverty in the world and is one of the two regions of the world where poverty did not decline since the onset of globalization trends in the last quarter of the 20th century.

The above assertion was supported by the World Bank in its review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The World Bank (2005) noted that, due to the slow socio-economic growth rate and slow progress in governance improvement reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people living in extreme poverty increased in the 1990s, leaving it as the region with the largest proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day in the whole world. In his statement on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2005, Dauda Toure, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative to Uganda, reiterated the need for developing countries to pay more attention to the interplay between poverty and the political, economic and social environment. He called for a political commitment from the governments so as to enact the right policies that would manage well all external support for poverty eradication. He emphasized the need to undertake massive social mobilization of all citizens to play their part in poverty eradication. These suggestions are pointers to the big role that good governance can play in facilitating a faster poverty eradication campaign. Further, the importance of good governance in poverty eradication can be seen from the following statements:

Effective governance is often the missing link between national anti-poverty efforts and poverty reduction. For many poor countries it is in improving governance that external assistance is needed – but not with a new set of poverty-related conditionalities imposed on top of the existing economic conditionalities (UNDP, 2000).

Countries can promote human development for all when they have governance systems that are fully accountable to all the people – when all people can participate in debates and decisions that shape their lives. Democracy helps protect people from economic and political catastrophe, such as famine and descent into chaos and can contribute to political stability, providing open space for political opposition and handovers of power. Democratic governance can trigger a virtuous cycle of development – as political freedom empowers people to press for policies that expand social and economic opportunities (UNDP, 2002).

Onyejekwe (2004) reiterated the vital role of good governance in fostering development, including offering a platform for poverty reduction. While addressing the workshop for the National Focal Points on the Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries (BPOA), he emphasised thus:

Achieving the objectives of the Brussels Programme for Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001 – 2010 will depend on a lot of factors – internal and external – least of which is the imperative of institutionalization of good governance and a capable state in each member state.

The above comments and many more that are frequently expressed in conferences clearly manifest that improving governance everywhere in Africa as is the case in all parts of the world is the surest way of

enabling the people to build real freedom and real development for themselves and their countries. The table below illustrates Uganda's governance ratings on a number of governance criteria.

**Table 1.5:** Uganda governance indicators: 1996 – 2006<sup>1</sup>.

Governance Indicator <sup>2</sup>	Number of Sources <sup>3</sup>	Year	Percentile Rank (0-100) <sup>4</sup>	Governance Score (-2.5 to +2.5) <sup>5</sup>	Standard Error <sup>6</sup>
Voice and Accountability	15	2006	30.3	-0.54	0.13
	13	2005	29.8	-0.60	0.15
	12	2004	23.6	-0.83	0.16
	11	2003	26.4	-0.79	0.15
	9	2002	20.2	-1.01	0.17
	6	2000	15.9	-1.16	0.22
	6	1998	24.0	-0.84	0.23
5	1996	30.1	-0.57	0.24	
Political Stability	9	2006	13.5	-1.18	0.23
	9	2005	9.6	-1.38	0.23
	9	2004	9.1	-1.42	0.23
	8	2003	8.2	-1.53	0.24
	7	2002	7.7	-1.67	0.24
	6	2000	9.6	-1.54	0.26
	6	1998	12.5	-1.27	0.25
5	1996	12.0	-1.31	0.29	
Government Effectiveness	13	2006	34.6	-0.50	0.16
	12	2005	36.0	-0.47	0.15
	12	2004	38.4	-0.43	0.15
	11	2003	39.8	-0.40	0.15
	10	2002	33.2	-0.54	0.16
	6	2000	40.3	-0.42	0.19
	6	1998	35.1	-0.50	0.16
4	1996	30.8	-0.57	0.27	
Regulatory Quality	11	2006	46.8	-0.18	0.17
	11	2005	55.6	+0.07	0.17
	11	2004	50.2	-0.11	0.17
	10	2003	51.7	-0.06	0.18
	9	2002	52.2	-0.04	0.20
	7	2000	52.7	+0.02	0.23
	7	1998	55.1	+0.24	0.32
5	1996	59.5	+0.33	0.33	
Rule of Law	18	2006	39.0	-0.50	0.14
	16	2005	31.0	-0.69	0.14
	16	2004	26.2	-0.76	0.13
	15	2003	31.4	-0.64	0.14
	13	2002	28.6	-0.74	0.14
	10	2000	23.8	-0.83	0.15
	9	1998	32.4	-0.62	0.18
6	1996	29.0	-0.64	0.23	
Control of Corruption	14	2006	26.2	-0.71	0.15
	12	2005	19.4	-0.87	0.15
	12	2004	23.3	-0.80	0.15
	11	2003	27.2	-0.77	0.16
	9	2002	15.0	-0.98	0.17
	7	2000	15.0	-0.96	0.19
	7	1998	19.4	-0.86	0.19
4	1996	31.6	-0.54	0.25	

Source: Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi (2007), Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996 – 2006, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4280, World Bank, Washington, DC. (<http://www.govindicators.org>)

### Notes about the table:

1. The governance indicators presented by Kaufmann et al (2007) aggregated the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. These data were gathered from a number of reputable survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations (see Table 1.6 below).
2. Kaufmann et al used six dimensions of governance to determine the score of governance per country. The six dimensions were:
  - i. Voice and accountability which measured the extent to which a country's citizens were able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.
  - ii. Political stability and absence of violence measured the perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilised or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism.
  - iii. Government effectiveness measured the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.
  - iv. Regulatory control measured the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development
  - v. Rule of law measured the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by rules of society, in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.
  - vi. Control of corruption measured the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of state by elites and private interests.
3. The column for sources indicates the number of individual data sources on which the aggregate governance indicator was based. The following table lists the sources that the researchers used to get information on Uganda's governance indicators:

**Table 1.6:** Data Sources from which the Governance Indicators were based.

Source	Type
African development Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessments	Experts
Afrobarometer	Survey
Bertelsmann Transformation Index	Experts
Business Environment Risk Intelligence Financial Ethics Index	Experts
Cingranelli Richards Human Rights Database & Political Terror Scale	Experts
Economist Intelligence Unit	Experts
Freedom House	Experts
Freedom House Countries at the Crossroads	Experts
Gallup World Poll	Survey
Global Insight Business Conditions and Risk Indicators	Experts
Global Insight Global Risk Service	Experts
Global Integrity Index	Experts
IFAD Rural Sector Performance Assessments	Experts
iJET Country Security Risk Ratings	Experts
International Budget Project Open Budget Index	Experts
Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom	Experts
Merchant International Group Gray Area Dynamics	Experts
OECD Development Center African Economic Outlook	Experts
Political Risk Services International Country Risk Guide	Experts
Reporters Without Borders Press freedom Index	Experts
US State Department trafficking in People Report	Experts
World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessments	Experts
World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report	Survey

\*Experts: This source captured the views of small number of experts.

\*Surveys: This source captured views of large samples of households or firms.

4. The column for percentile rank indicates the rank of a country among all countries in the world. 0 corresponds to lowest rank and 100 corresponds to highest rank.
5. The column for governance score estimates the level of governance measured on a scale from appropriately -2.5 to +2.5. Higher values correspond to better governance.
6. The column for standard error captures the precision for the data and scores. Lower values indicate more precision.

From table 1.5, it can be observed that as far as governance is concerned, Uganda did not fare well during the mentioned period. That this period also witnessed slow progress in poverty reduction and increasing income inequality in Uganda is therefore no coincidence. The government performance was equally reported to be poor across all governance indicators. Of the six dimensions used by Kaufmann et al, voice and accountability, government effectiveness and the control of corruption were central to this research and Uganda's performance was worst in these areas over the years. It is possible therefore to link Uganda's slow poverty reduction from 1997 onwards to this poor governance performance in critical areas of development paradigm.

To further get insights into the correlation between good governance and poverty eradication, I studied the Ibrahim index of African governance designed by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in 2007 on the basis of data from 48 Sub-Saharan African countries, Uganda inclusive. The Ibrahim Index, a project of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, was developed under the direction of Robert I. Rotberg and Rachel M. Gisselquist of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was established as an African initiative to stimulate debate on good governance across Sub-Saharan Africa and the world, to provide objective criteria by which citizens can hold their governments to account, to recognise achievement in African leadership and to provide a practical way in which African leaders can build positive legacies on the continent when they have left office. By using reasonably complete data from 2005 to 2007 for 48 Sub-Saharan African nation-states, the Ibrahim Index measured the degree to which essential political goods were provided within these countries. It defined governance as the delivery of key political goods, capturing defined and measurable outcomes rather than subjective assessments. The essential political goods were categorised into the following five sets: safety and stability; rule of law, transparency and corruption; participation and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity and human development.

The parameters of governance used in the Ibrahim Index were useful in this research because they are not different from the World Bank governance model that this study based itself. Both models emphasize participation and accountability, despite the Ibrahim Index being more elaborate than the World Bank. Table 1.7 below shows Uganda's level of governance among other Sub-Saharan African countries according to the Ibrahim Index:

**Table 1.7:** Uganda's level of governance among other Sub-Saharan African countries.

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### The Ibrahim Index of African Governance

The 2007 Index is based on data from 2005, the last year with reasonably complete available data for nearly all sub-Saharan African countries.

Ranking	Country	Ibrahim Index of African Governance	Safety and Security	Rule of law, transparency and corruption	Participation and human rights	Sustainable economic opportunity	Human development	Change in ranking 2000-2005
1	Mauritius	86.2	91.7	85.2	88.7	75.5	90.0	1
2	Seychelles	83.1	83.3	74.2	79.3	80.5	98.3	-1
3	Botswana	73.0	75.0	88.3	75.5	58.1	67.9	0
4	Cape Verde	72.9	84.0	80.4	74.6	52.8	72.8	2
5	South Africa	71.1	61.1	75.2	81.1	67.4	70.5	-1
6	Gabon	67.4	94.4	57.1	59.9	62.4	63.0	1
7	Namibia	67.0	77.7	74.5	69.4	55.0	58.3	-2
8	Ghana	66.8	85.9	70.1	67.7	46.5	63.8	1
9	Senegal	66.0	85.9	64.8	75.5	46.2	57.5	3
10	São Tomé and Príncipe	65.3	84.0	55.6	80.4	44.6	61.8	1
11	Lesotho	64.1	91.7	66.7	63.4	43.4	55.5	4
12	Malawi	63.7	86.1	65.0	66.0	45.0	56.3	-4
13	Benin	61.2	78.4	52.8	69.6	46.9	58.4	-3
14	Tanzania	60.7	83.3	58.4	61.0	48.6	52.1	0
15	Kenya	59.3	62.9	57.9	64.1	47.9	63.8	2
16	Mauritania	58.8	77.3	62.3	63.8	34.5	55.9	3
17	Madagascar	57.7	86.1	57.8	58.1	40.1	46.4	-4
18	Rwanda	57.5	76.2	47.6	69.7	47.3	46.9	18
19	Zambia	57.5	77.8	61.3	54.9	47.8	45.8	-1
20	Mali	56.9	84.0	52.7	71.1	33.8	43.1	9
21	Burkina Faso	56.7	78.4	58.5	58.0	39.1	49.2	1
22	Gambia	55.8	78.3	53.4	52.1	44.4	51.0	-6
23	Mozambique	55.8	86.1	43.8	71.0	35.8	42.4	-3
24	Cameroon	55.6	77.7	42.5	50.4	48.1	59.2	1
25	Uganda	55.4	70.5	55.7	50.7	50.0	50.3	1
26	Comoros	53.8	78.3	48.9	55.9	38.1	47.5	6
27	Ethiopia	53.2	75.4	48.7	57.4	33.0	51.6	10
28	Niger	53.1	78.4	52.6	70.7	28.3	35.6	6
29	Djibouti	52.5	78.3	39.8	52.2	39.1	52.9	-2
30	Congo	52.1	71.3	47.8	47.6	40.4	53.2	5
31	Zimbabwe	52.0	75.0	45.8	45.0	44.4	49.7	-10
32	Equatorial Guinea	51.6	85.4	44.3	38.5	47.3	42.3	6
33	Guinea	51.5	72.8	51.1	44.9	37.3	51.5	-2
34	Swaziland	50.9	63.9	51.3	31.2	50.4	57.5	-6
35	Togo	49.8	77.4	46.7	41.4	42.7	40.5	-5
36	Côte d'Ivoire	48.8	77.1	37.8	32.8	44.1	52.2	-12
37	Nigeria	48.3	62.8	44.3	44.2	40.7	49.5	2
38	Eritrea	48.3	74.8	60.1	25.2	33.1	48.2	5
39	Sierra Leone	48.3	72.0	35.1	68.4	39.4	26.4	2
40	Burundi	46.8	60.4	48.8	41.9	40.3	42.2	2
41	Central African Republic	46.7	68.8	45.0	54.5	38.7	26.6	-8
42	Angola	44.3	67.8	38.1	36.8	40.7	38.3	5
43	Liberia	42.7	65.1	32.2	40.4	41.4	34.4	-3
44	Guinea-Bissau	42.7	71.2	33.8	38.7	28.2	41.5	-21
45	Sudan	40.0	31.1	31.4	38.3	41.3	57.8	0
46	Chad	38.8	68.3	42.1	43.3	24.2	15.9	-2
47	Democratic Republic of Congo	38.6	69.4	25.4	24.3	31.6	42.3	-1
48	Somalia	28.1	63.5	19.4	23.5	5.1	28.9	0

www.moibrahimfoundation.org

Source: Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2007, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, London.

The six political goods determined as essential elements of good governance were defined in the following manner:

### **Safety and Security**

This political good is considered primary according to Mo Ibrahim Governance Index (2007) because without safety and security, good governance and provision of other political goods becomes impossible. Safety and security was thus measured using the following indices:

1. The number of armed conflicts in which a government is involved in a particular year;
2. The intensity of the violent conflicts in the country in that year;
3. The number of death due to intentional attacks on civilians by governments of formally organised armed groups;
4. Refugees and asylum seekers originating from each country;
5. Internally displaced persons (IDPs);
6. Ease of access to small arms and light weapons;
7. Level of violent crime.

### **Rule of law, transparency and corruption**

The argument behind the choice of rule of law, transparency and corruption as another political good was based on the premise that nation-states with enforceable codes of law, adherence to international conventions and legal obligations and with judicial mechanisms free of state control have stronger rule of law regimes and supply larger amounts of the political good of rule of law. To achieve this, the Mo Ibrahim Governance index (2007) considered the following indices:

1. Ratification of core international human rights conventions;
2. The presence of international sanctions for human rights violations;
3. Enforcement of transparent laws on contracts and private property;
4. Judicial independence;
5. Efficiency of courts;
6. Efficiency of national institutions regarding contract enforcement
7. Level of public corruption

### **Participation and human rights**

As a political good, participation and human rights was equated to ability of citizens to contest elections freely, respect for basic human rights by the state and absence of gender discrimination. The following indices were considered to determine the level of governance in this sphere:

1. Competitive executive elections
2. Participation of main opposition candidates in executive elections
3. Competitive legislative elections
4. Participation of main opposition candidates in legislative elections
5. Respect for physical rights: absence of extrajudicial killing, disappearances, torture, and political imprisonment
6. Respect for civil rights: movement, political participation, worker's rights, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion



7. Press freedom at the most basic level, measured in terms of the number of journalists killed each year as compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists
8. Press freedom index from Reporters without Borders
9. Women's economic rights
10. Women's political rights
11. Women's social rights

### **Sustainable economic opportunity**

Sustainable development as an essential political good is derived from the observance that well-governed nation-states enable their citizens to pursue personal entrepreneurial goals and potentially prosper. They do so by providing regulatory frameworks conducive to such prosperity and by creating stable and forward-looking macroeconomic and fiscal policy environments that facilitate and encourage national and personal wealth creation. The following were the indices used to measure this governance indicator:

#### **GDP per capita**

1. Economic growth measured in terms of national percentage change in GDP per capita
2. Annual inflation rate
3. Government budget deficits and surpluses as a percentage of GDP
4. Reliability of financial institutions
5. The overall business environment
6. The density of a nation's road network (both paved and unpaved) per square kilometre of national land
7. The availability and reliability of electricity measured as the number of days per year during which there were electrical outages
8. Telephone subscription (both pre- and post-paid) per 100 inhabitants
9. Computer usage per 100 inhabitants
10. Internet usage per 100 inhabitants
11. Environmental sensitivity in terms of reduction of environmental stresses on human health and promotion of ecosystem vitality and natural resource management

#### **Human development**

According to the Ibrahim Governance Index (2007), it is the role of government to ensure that its citizens are supplied with the political good of effective human development. Everywhere, especially in the world, citizens expect their governments to provide opportunities for educational advancement, health care and medical and sanitary services, and poverty mitigation and alleviation. To measure performance in this governance indicator, they used the following indices:

1. An analysis of national poverty results on the following basis:
  - b. The percentage of all nationals who live on the globally recognised figure of less than \$1 per day?
  - c. The percentage of all nationals who live below their own national poverty line?
  - d. The equality or inequality of the national distribution of income?

**2. An analysis of health outcome which considered:**

- a. Life expectancy at birth
- b. Infant mortality per 1000 live births
- c. Maternal mortality per 100.000 live births
- d. Under nourishment
- e. Percentage of children aged 12 – 23 immunised against the killer diseases: polio, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, diphtheria and tuberculosis
- f. Percentage of people aged 15 – 49 living with HIV
- g. Estimated number of new TB cases per 100.000 people
- h. Access to qualified physicians/density of physicians per 100.000 people
- i. Access to nurses/density of nurses per 1000 people
- j. Percentage of population with access to potable water.

**3. An analysis of education opportunity based on the following premises:**

- a. Adult literacy
- b. Adult literacy among women
- c. Primary school completion rate
- d. Primary school completion rate among girls
- e. Pupil/teacher ration in primary school
- f. Persistence: progression of all students from primary to secondary school
- g. Ratio of female and male students in primary and secondary schools

The Mo Ibrahim Governance Index (2007) reflects almost the same situation on Uganda's level of governance as the results by Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi (2007). The two studies used parameters that generally underscore governance in its holistic sense and in both cases; Uganda's governance level is mid way between the two extremes (bad and better governance). The two results reveal that Uganda's level of governance is still low. Thus we can depend on these results as a true reflection of Uganda's governance mechanism, which this research was interested in correlating with poverty eradication campaign in Uganda from 1986 onwards.

The two researches on governance in Africa and their results for Uganda were not contradicted by my research findings. The data which I collected from 2019 to 2020 also established that poor governance has high on the list of impediments to development including poverty reduction in Uganda. This coincidence therefore reinforces my position that Uganda would have significantly reduced poverty if its governance practices were much better.

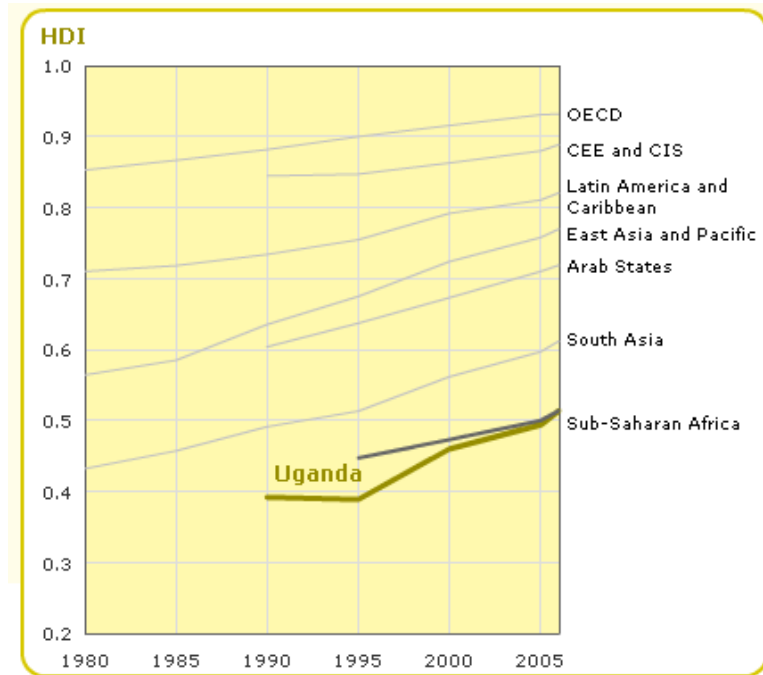
Due to poor governance mechanisms in Uganda and her Sub-Saharan ilk, it is not surprising to see that the standard of living of their population is far below the average of OECD and other upcoming regions. For instance, on Human Development Index (HDI), Uganda was ranked 157th out of 182 countries in 2007. Between 1990 and 2007<sup>6</sup> Uganda's HDI rose by 1.59% annually from 0.392 to 0.514. The UNDP asserts that though the index is not in any sense a comprehensive measure of human development due to exclusion of important indicators such as gender or income inequality nor more difficult to measure concepts like respect for human rights and political freedoms, it does provide a broadened prism for

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<sup>6</sup>UNDP, Human Development Report 2009 [[http://hdrstats.undp.org/fr/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_UGA.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/fr/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_UGA.html)], assessed on 05/11/2022]

viewing human progress and the complex relationship between income and well-being. By looking at some of the most fundamental aspects of people’s lives and opportunities, the HDI provides a much more complete picture of a country's development than other indicators, such as GDP per capita. The Figure below shows Uganda’s HDI among other regions of the world.

**Figure 1.1:** Trends of Uganda’s HDI in Comparison with the World HDI



Source: Indicator table G of the Human Development Report 2009

The indicators used by UNDP in calculating Uganda’s HDI are illustrated in the table below. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the largest proportion of poor people in the world and Uganda’s story is not any different compared with the overall performance of the sub-continent.

**Table 1.8:** Uganda’s Development Index 2007.

HDI value	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and above)	Combined gross school enrolment ratio (%)	GDP per capita (PPP US\$)
(0.514)	(51.9)	(73.6)	(62.3)	(1,059)

The UNDP also calculated Uganda’s Human Poverty Index (HPI-1) which focuses on the proportion of people below certain threshold levels in each of the dimensions of the HDI; living a long and healthy life, having access to education, and a decent standard of living. By looking beyond income deprivation, the HPI-1 represents a multi-dimensional alternative to the income poverty measure that is used to measure poverty in Uganda. The table below shows Uganda’s HPI-1 standing.

**Table 1.9:** Selected indicators of Human Poverty in Uganda 2007.

Human Poverty Index (HPI-1)	Probability of not surviving to age 40 (%)	Adult illiteracy rate (% aged 15 and above)	People not using improved water source (%)	Children underweight for age (% aged under 5)
(28.8)	(31.4)	(26.4)	(36)	(20)



The HPI-1 value for Uganda was 28.8% which ranked it at 91st among 135 countries for which the index was calculated. The HPI-1 measured severe deprivation in health by the proportion of people who are not expected to survive to the age of 40. Education was measured by the adult illiteracy rate. And a decent standard of living was measured by the unweighted average of people not using an improved water source and the proportion of children under age 5 who are underweight for their age.

The above human development indicators showed little progress in fighting poverty in Uganda. However, what is surprising here is the way an impoverished country like Uganda could afford expensive and luxurious lifestyles to government officers, especially on the political side. This state of governance affairs in Uganda exacerbates the income inequality which was on the rise from the late 1990s onwards.

A clear case of outlandish expenditure in Uganda can be seen within the local governments where the political leaders spend a lot of district revenues on buying expensive Four-Wheel-Drive vehicles, even when the Local Government budgets are always meagre and insufficient for service delivery to the citizens. The Central Government is not immune from this scourge either as the costs incurred on public administration are not commensurate with goods and services accorded to the entire citizenry. The picture below epitomises the problem of poor accountability and governance at large that has been afflicting service delivery in Uganda at both national and local governance levels.

**Figure 1.2:** Transport Facilitation for Local Government Leaders in Uganda.



Source: *The New Vision, Kampala, 19 June 2006, p. 7.*

Many local governments in Uganda are constrained in raising revenues to support service delivery due to the narrowness of their tax bases. They depend largely on central government transfers, international donors and non-government organisations to finance their budgets. Yet, they spend the little collected

from the citizens to buy expensive vehicles for their political heads. This is an act of political extravagancy at the expense of social services for their local populations. Simple and less expensive vehicles would suffice to facilitate official transportation. The problem of poor accountability arises when people entrusted with the wealth of their fellow citizens use the occasion to treat the treasury as their “piggy bank”, awarding themselves vast amounts of money through salaries, allowances and purchases of expensive, luxury, and gas-guzzling motor vehicles thus leaving little for their citizens. In such a state of governance affairs, services such as health, education, roads and agriculture improvement that could contribute to rapid poverty reduction and eradication are compromised, thus keeping the population in a vicious circle of poverty.

### **The Impact of Globalisation on Governance and Poverty Eradication in Uganda.**

The dilemma of Uganda in eradicating poverty through various policy interventions can serve as a microcosm of similar difficult experiences in many other poor countries of the world, but especially those of Sub-Saharan Africa. The enigma in development literature today is why some poor countries have remained poor despite the many opportunities that are abundant to them within their own geographical confines and elsewhere in the world. The onset of globalisation has according to many, increased opportunities for tackling many causes of poverty in all corners of the world through faster transfer of information and resources from one part of the world to another. The question on many people’s lips is whether poor countries have remained poor due to the nature of the international economic and political arrangements or due to inefficiencies in the use of local resources and support from outside development partners.

It has often been argued that poor countries are failing to break even due to the lopsided nature of the international political and economic policy landscape that favours the western rich countries. It is true that the world community is deeply concerned about the effects of globalisation on international business transactions and government capacity to enact policies to regulate its business concerns. These concerns about globalisation stem from its double-sided nature.

One side supports globalisation as good for promoting international business and transfer of technology and resources from the developed world to the less developed world thus producing opportunities for faster economic growth and development and the relief of global poverty (Ohmae, 1995: 129-137). The other side, however, contends that globalisation has increased the development gap between the developed and less developed worlds as it has facilitated a faster transfer of resources from the less developed world and concentrated them in the developed world through unbalanced trade deals (Lewis, 1993: 345-360; Kerr, 2001: 114). They also argue that globalisation has eroded the power and capacity of governments to regulate national economies according to the interests of their citizens, and concentrated this power into the hands of multinational corporations that are concerned with their own profit motives at the expense of the environment and social conditions of the citizens. Such criticisms have in some cases been expressed through violent protests against world economic meetings as the case in Seattle, USA in 1999, Melbourne, Australia in 2000, Switzerland, Austria and Italy in 2001 and later in Germany in 2007. The protests were an indication of some weaknesses within the process of globalisation but this is not to say that all poverty problems in Uganda and her counterparts in Sub-Saharan Africa, some parts of Asia and the Caribbean should be blamed on globalisation.

The above contradictions about globalisation apart, it is evident that globalisation favours the rich countries of the north. But is also true that poor countries, especially those of Sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda inclusive, have received considerable attention and assistance from the international community towards their development aspirations, including reducing poverty, in the last two decades (2000 – 2020). The enigma therefore is to explain why there is little progress in poverty reduction despite the world attention and resource assistance. Of course the suggestion that poor countries are poor due to deficiencies in natural resource endowments does not hold water as evidenced by the abundant natural resource endowments such as forests, lakes, rivers, minerals, fertile soils, animals, good climate, oil and abundant tourist attractions, to mention but a few. Brown & Tiffen (1992: 19) demonstrated that African countries contrast sharply in terms of natural resources, whereby Africa is rich while East Asia has little, yet the latter has performed better in poverty reduction in the last two decades the 20th century.

The onus for poor countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda inclusive, is to find the root cause of poverty despite internal resource availability. There is need to examine the condition in these countries that explain why this potential has failed to be transformed into real wealth. These countries need to focus beyond natural resource endowments to what value addition can be made further to get competitive and catch up with other continents. Emphasis may have to shift to issues of technological advancement, investment in human capital, reducing disease prevalence, change in cultural practices and beliefs. All it takes to achieve this is the need to embrace good governance practices in policy management at all levels of government administration; national and local by all stakeholders in Uganda's development process; the government, donors, citizens and civil society organisations. That way, Uganda and its Sub-Saharan African counterparts can turn their resource comparative advantages into competitive advantages as was done by some countries of East Asia.

This research explored what a poor country like Uganda ought to have done or ought to do internally to somehow fit into the international development web of poverty reduction and good standards of living for the citizens. The idea of paucity of resources and the era of colonialism, which is often quoted, might not adequately exonerate poor countries of their poverty situations. If this is the case, then why have some countries of East Asia that had as much poverty and had been colonised as their Sub Saharan African counterparts taken big strides in development in the last two decades of the 20th Century. The problem therefore might lie in the political economy of resource allocation and systems of governance that a particular country employs. For example, the success of Malaysia's poverty eradication policies is evident from the sharp decline in the incidence of poverty from 52.4% in 1970 to 6.1% in 1997, to 5.1% in 2002 (UNDP, 2006) and subsequently to 0.6% in 2015 (Asian Development Bank, 2016). Such good performance is definitely a pointer that the country is on the right path to achieving the SDGs.

The success of poverty alleviation policies in the so-called East Asian Economic Tigers has been attributed to the effective role played by the state in public policy management, observance of good governance principles, institution of effective service delivery systems, and encouragement of direct targeting and participation of the poor in poverty eradication programmes (Chamhuri Siwar, 2005, 2016). The term East Asian Tigers refers to the economies of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. These countries were noted for maintaining high growth rates and rapid industrialization between the early 1970s and the 1990s. Right behind the first four were Malaysia, Thailand, China and Indonesia.



The performance of these countries in terms of development and poverty reduction is a proof that the enactment of pragmatic and egalitarian policies in all spheres of human endeavour is a prerequisite for development. Despite lack of natural resources and absence of large domestic markets, they performed well; this is largely due to the enactment of sensible and effective policies in spheres of infrastructure, manpower development, land reforms, education, income equality, property rights and industry (Brown & Tiffen 1992, World Bank 1993, Sarel 1996, Chamuhuri Siwar, 2016). Perhaps this is the missing gap in the efforts of other poor countries like Uganda that have not moved fast in their poverty eradication endeavours. The Asian Tigers example therefore reinforces the role of holistic policy-making approach and good governance in poverty eradication.

Even when the Sub-Saharan countries have reported steady economic growth rates, this has not translated into poverty reduction in most cases. In Uganda's case, the rate of economic growth that is often announced at the beginning of every financial year does not usually correspond to reduced poverty indicators at the grass root levels where most of the poor dwell. For instance, there was much concern among policy makers and stakeholders that non-income measures of well-being such as infant mortality and children's nutritional status were not improving over time despite the substantial increases in national income (UBOS 2001, MFPED 2002; Task Force on Infant and Maternal Mortality, 2003). Though the focus on economic growth as an engine for poverty eradication produced some results in Uganda in the last two decades of the 20th century, the same period witnessed increasing income inequality gaps (Okidi and Mugambe, 2002, UBOS, 2005). This was so because the government did not pay attention to welfare distribution and thus the economy could not fully capture the poverty alleviation benefits of economic growth for the poor rural folks (Okidi and Mugambe, 2002). When this state of governance affairs is added to kleptocracy in government operations, the stage is clearly set for failure of poverty eradication programs. Many studies and reports have proved that Uganda, like most other less developed countries, has not been immune to this political melancholy.

All in all, the poverty eradication policies in Uganda targeted to achieve economic growth with the hope that the benefits of economic growth would trickle down to all sections of the population. But this was far from being achieved because of certain governance issues that were not well tackled.

## Conclusion

From the ensuing data on governance and poverty eradication policy performance in Uganda in the period of the NRM regime (1986 – 2020), we have learnt according to our research questions that the governance concept is well understood by actors in the policy making process. That the level of the quality of governance over time has improved but still falling below the generally accepted international standards and that this state of affairs has greatly affected the performance poverty eradication policies in Uganda from 1986 onwards. We have further established that good governance is required at all levels of government administration as each level whether at supranational, national or local can positively or negative impact on the policy making and performance depending on how they approach or integrate good governance practices at all stages of the policy management process. With continuous investment in good governance practices in the future as seen in other case situations, Uganda can secure improved performance in poverty eradication like in the case of Malaysia where poverty has become a thing of the past.

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