

Tubas Governorate Surveillance System



TUBAS GOVERNORATE INTEGRATED HOUSEHOLD SURVEY DECEMBER, 2005 – MARCH, 2006

NEWSLETTER VI



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I. Background:

TUBAS Governorate is located in the north eastern part of the West Bank; it is bordered by Jenin Governorate and Armistice Line to the north, Nablus and Jericho Governorates to the west and south, and the Jordan valley to the east.

Tubas Governorate extends across a high plain that slopes eastward towards the Jordan Valley. It is located to the west of Jordan River and the south of the Bissan plain; the area is also rich in springs and flood streams. Tubas is considered a primary agricultural area in Palestine and a significant land for animal grazing due to soil fertility, water availability and the relatively warm weather.

Tubas governorate comprises of 23 localities, of which 3 localities are governed by municipality councils, 6 localities by village councils and the rest are managed by project committees.

The estimated population of the Governorate was 46,644 in mid 2005. The population of Tubas Governorate constitutes about 3% of the total population of the Palestinian Territory, where 33.4% of Tubas Governorates population lives in urban areas, 54.6% of the population lives in rural areas and 11.9 % lives in a refugee camp.

Tubas is one of the Palestinian Governorates which is suffering severely from the current harsh economic and imbalanced political conditions which are affecting the life of Palestinian people and their level and quality of living. This study was trying to investigate the impact of the prevailing conditions on the Palestinian people, investigating the socioeconomic condition of Palestinian households and the impact of political conditions on their lives during the period January-March 2006.

This paper contains an integrated analysis for the Governorate of Tuba from December 2005 to March 2006, taking into consideration the fixed and the variable indicators. All the generated data will be accessible for the public on the project Website, entitled: <http://proxy.arij.org/tubas>

II. Objectives:

This survey was a continuation of a previously conducted comprehensive household baseline survey for Tubas Governorate carried out in December 2005, which investigated and analyzed the livelihoods and socioeconomic conditions of Palestinian people in Tubas Governorate on the household level in different localities.

Consequently, this study aimed to achieve the same plan. Additionally, it aimed also to monitor the factors that are affecting the livelihood of Palestinian households on monthly basis for the period between December, 2005 and March, 2006.

The obtained results would assist decision makers, stakeholders as well as donors, taking into consideration the main factors that are causing vulnerability, food insecurity, insecurity and poverty in the Palestinian communities of Tubas Governorate as well as factors at the household level.

III. Methodology:

Tubas has 23 communities, which are diverse and classified as urban, rural, Bedouin, and refugee camps. The projected population for the Tubas Governorate by mid 2006 is 48,128 people.

Conducting a comprehensive baseline survey, ten localities were selected taking into consideration appropriate criteria and characteristics of the different localities to be representative in the selected localities. The targeted households for the baseline survey were 111 households, distributed on the different ten localities based on the population size and taking into consideration other criteria.

The methodology of the survey was based on contacting key persons in each of targeted locality to assist in selecting the targeted households based on the main economic activities of the household leader. Therefore, the household selection covered households with at least one of the following economic activities: plant producing farmer, livestock farmer, government and private sector employee, worker, merchant, professional and unemployed.

To meet the survey objectives a monthly household baseline questionnaire was developed and conducted. The questionnaire included questions covering the following main variable indicators and some important fixed information:

- *Identification data*
- *Social information*
- *Health*
- *Income resources*
- *Expenditures*
- *Food security*
- *Impact of Occupation practices*
- *Agricultural activities*

Through a monthly based surveillance, the variable indicators and information were updated, analyzed and reported. There was a specialized surveying team who was interviewing the people and updating the information on monthly bases. All completed questionnaires were reviewed and entered into the computer and analyzed on monthly

bases as well as for all the period between December, 2005 and March, 2006, using Statistical Program for Social Studies (SPSS).

IV. Results and Discussion:

A. Household Identification Data:

The total number of surveyed household members during January-March 2006 ranged between 840 and 842 people: 50.4% were males and 49.6% were females. The reason for this change is mainly caused by the number of births and deaths, and the departure of young people to universities.

Only 2% of the surveyed households were led by women, and 5% of the household leaders have more than one wife. As for residency, during January and February there has been a slight drop in the percentage of residents against an increase in the percentage of the non residents, it has dropped from 98.6% in December 2005 to 98.2% and 98% respectively. However, that percentage has increased in March, where it has reached 98.8%, as some of the family members had comeback to join their family again temporarily or permanently.

B. Working force and economic conditions :

The analysis of the working force of the surveyed households showed that it has gone through some slight improvements, for the percentage of unemployment among the household members has continuously decreased during the study period. As the unemployment percentage was 6.5% in December, in March 2006 it reached 3.4%.

As for the reasons of unemployment, it can be summarized In *Figure 1*. As one may notice, the major reason for unemployment is not having permits to work in Israel, and to move freely to the other parts of the country.

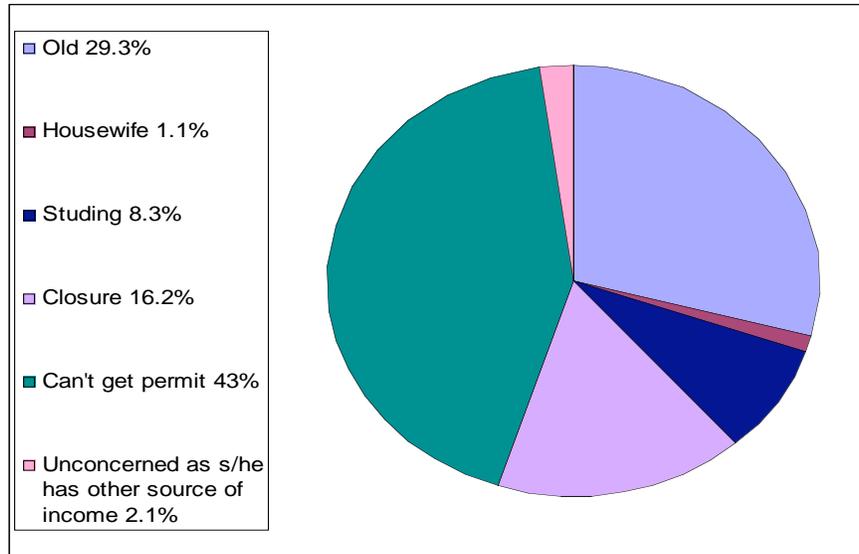


Figure 1: Average Percentage of the reasons of Unemployment during December 2005 – March 2006

The percentage of students, babies and old people has been almost stable; as well as the percentage of people with disabilities. *Figure 2* shows the averages of the work force for the study period.

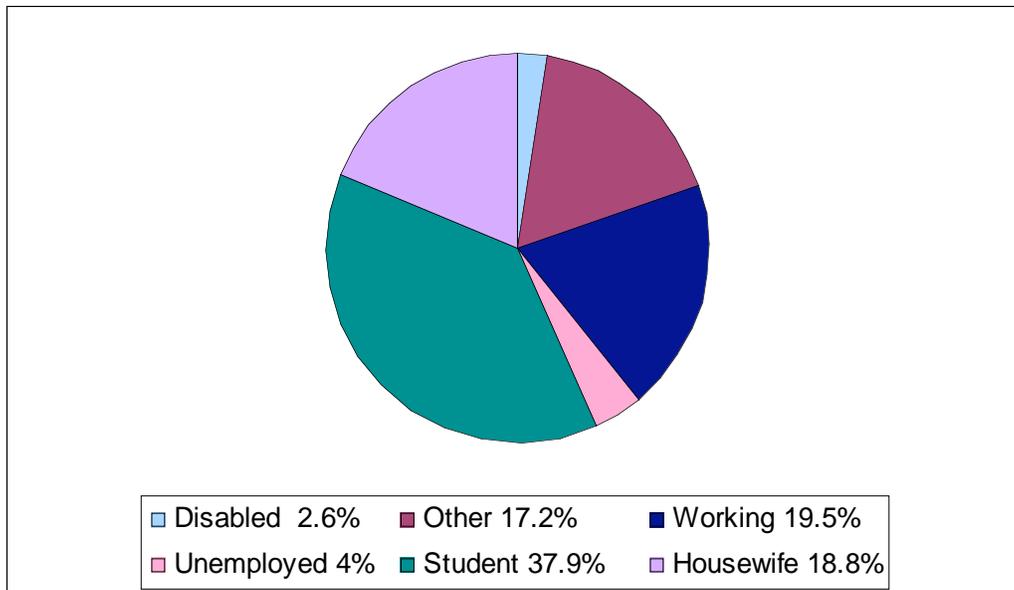


Figure 2: Average Percentage of the Population's Relation to the Labor Force during December 2005 - March 2006

Women used to form 8.1% of the labor force in December 2005. This percentage decreased continuously to reach 5.5% in March 2006. Women mainly work as employees in the governmental, NGO's and private sectors, also as livestock and plant production farmers and, rarely, as manual workers.

Due to the current unstable political and economical conditions, and limited job opportunities the Palestinian people have shifted their economic activities to establish their own businesses.

Thus the analyses of families' working force by type and location showed that almost more than half of the population owns their businesses; this percentage reached its highest 58.5% in February, but then decreased to reach 54.7% in March, followed by Government employees, private sector and NGO's employees, workers in the West Bank and workers in Israel with averages of 15.8%, 12.55%, 10.05%, 5.3% respectively.

The comparison of monthly working days and monthly income in January 2006 compared to December 2005 revealed that the average monthly working days has remained the same: 24.5 days/month; then it slightly increased to 25.65 days/month in February 2006, and then it decreased to 25.5 days/month in March 2006.

Furthermore, the household monthly income has increased from 1525 NIS/Month (338.9 USD) in December 2005 to 1620 NIS/Month (360 USD) in January 2006, to 1741 NIS/Month (387 USD) in February 2006, and then it decreased to reach 1512 NIS/Month (336 USD) in March 2006.

C. Sources of income:

Agriculture (plant production and/or Livestock) and salaries form the largest source of income for the households in Tubas Governorate with around 27.6% each.

Despite the increase in household average monthly income in January 2006 compared with December 2005, the number of households who are depending on more than one source of income decreased from 44.1% to 31.8%. It has also decreased to reach 28.1% in February 2006, and 23.6% in March 2006.

During January and February 2006, none of the interviewed households got loans from their relatives, society or organizations. However, during March 2006, 1% (one household) of the interviewed households got loans with average value of 1000 USD/HH for special reasons.

On the other hand 4.5% in January 2006 have depended on selling or using part of their assets. Whereas this percentage decreased in February 2006 to 0.9% (one household, this household was obliged to sell part of the wife's jewelry with a value of 2500 NIS in order to pay medical treatments bills, and in March 2006 none of the households had to sell or use part of their assets.

D. Household Expenditures and Coping Strategies :

The analysis showed that the average household expenditures was being continuously reduced during the study period, until in March 2006 it was reduced by 17.2% ,(340 USD) compared with December 2005 (410 USD).

Generally, as *Figure 3* shows, the average of the household expenditures for the study period are accounted for by food expenses around 60.9%, educational expenses around 13.8%, transportation and communication around 10.7%, others including bills about 10.95%, and health accounting for 3.65%. Furthermore, there has been some other expenditure during that three months period. In January 2006, up to 92% of the surveyed households had special expenses for the occasion of Al-Adaha feast with an average additional cost of 190 USD per household. Additionally, 1.8% of the surveyed households had engagement or marriage occasions.

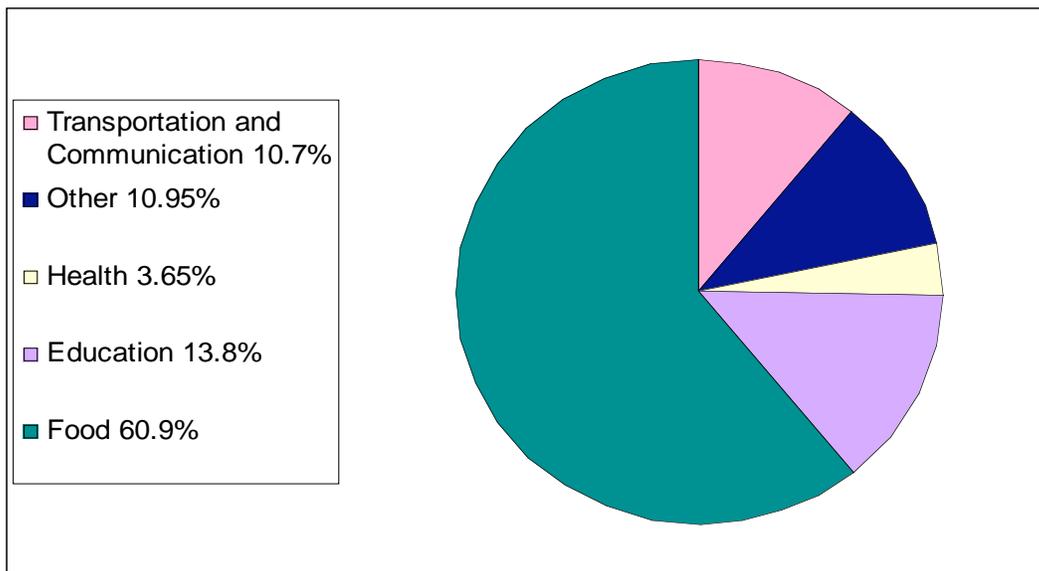


Figure 3: The Average of the Household Expenditures during December 2005 - March 2006

The current insecure and unsustainable living conditions in the Palestinian territories have obliged many of the vulnerable and poor families to redistribute their expenses priorities to minimize their living cost as much as they can to meet the shortage in their household income. Such shortage is due to the increase in the unemployment rate and the inaccessibility of local Palestinian lands and other Palestinian Territories due to the occupation practices and restrictions. The analysis of conducted survey for some localities in Tubas Governorate showed clearly the impact of the current unstable political and economic situation on their living conditions and how they developed coping strategies and practices to cope with abnormal sociopolitical situation.

These coping strategies and practices made people decrease unnecessary expenses, start buying less or cheaper children's clothes, obliged to purchase food on credit, start reducing expenditures, start taking loans and borrowing money, start using their life

saving money, start consuming less quantity and quality of food, rely on aid and assistance from relatives, community, and institutions, start reducing the expenses on health and education, sell some of their assets to buy basic food, try to increase the number of family workers, start reducing the meals of adults in favor of the children, and women start working in agriculture.

E. Food Security:

The survey showed that the diet of the Palestinian households in Tubas District include bread, sugar, vegetables, eggs, olive oil, rice on a daily basis, poultry meat, fruits, family snacks and sweets, milk, red meat, fish meat, and finally sweets for children. 100% of the interviewed households stated that it is easy to access food. As *table 1* below shows, the consumption of food is continuously decreasing, thus making people more and more vulnerable.

Table 1: Table of Average of Food consumption per capita during December 2005 - March 2006

Food Consumed	Consumption / person / month		
	2006		
	January	February	March
read meat	0.7 kg	0.46 kg	0.40 kg
poultry meat	1.13 kg	1.05 kg	1.02 kg
fish meat	0.47 kg	0.38 kg	0.34 kg
Bread	9.8 kg	9.74 kg	10.2 kg
Rice	2.9 kg	2.8 kg	3 kg
sugar	2.9 kg	2.7 kg	2.8 kg
vegetables	5.5 kg	6.0 kg	6.3 kg
fruits	2.6 kg	2.13 kg	2.03 kg
sweets for children	39 NIS	32 NIS	31 NIS
family snakes and sweets	13.7 NIS	10.1 NIS	9.8 NIS
milk	2.1 liter	2.1 liter	2.27 liter
olive oil	2.1 liter	1.1 liter	1.1 liter
egg	10.5 egg	9.8 egg	10.7 egg

The households consume bread, rice, sugar, vegetables and fruits on a daily basis, while the other commodities vary between one a month to every day for the houses that are consuming these commodities except for meats. The number of consumption days per household for different types of meat is limited and ranges for poultry meat from 2 to 12, red meat from 1 to 10 and for fish meat from 1 to 3 days per month. The monthly changes in the consumption rate of meat in percentage of households, days per month, and

quantity, varies from month to month based mainly on household income, social and holiday events and market prices.

The monthly consumption rate per person varies from one commodity to another and it mainly depends on the commodity cost. The results showed that the average monthly consumption rate per person of different commodities in March was less than January and more than February 2006.

The analysis showed that consumption is mainly focused on food, and a limited budget is expended on sweets for children and snacks and sweets for families, as the family income is still limited.

Moreover, 100% of the interviewed households stated that it was easy for them to have to access food during the study period.

F. Health Conditions:

Up to 73.9% of the surveyed households indicated that they have medical insurance and 26.1% have no insurance. The analysis showed that 75-79% of urban, rural and refugee households have medical insurance while only 33.3% of the surveyed Bedouin community has medical insurance.

The governmental medical insurance covers 90.4% of the insured households followed by private and UNRWA medical insurance with 4.8% each. The refugees are the only beneficiaries from UNRWA medical insurance, while all the communities are benefiting from the Government medical insurance, and only urban and rural communities are benefiting from private medical insurance.

Of total surveyed households, 33.3% households said it is difficult to them to reach the medical services while 61% said that they have some difficulties and the rest said it is easy for them to reach the medical services. The communities that are mainly facing difficulties to access the medical services are Bedouins (66.6% of total surveyed Bedouins households) and rural communities (48.5% of total surveyed rural households).

The analysis showed that 27.5% of the surveyed households are 1 km far from the closest medical facility, while 26.2% are 2-3 km far, 28.6% are 4-6 km far, and 17.9% are 25-27 km far from the closest medical facility. The longest distance from the closest medical facility was mainly found in rural areas.

Almost 3% in the surveyed households are disabled persons. The persons having physical disabilities and problems form 30% of the disabled persons, while almost 22% of disabled persons having multiple disabilities, followed by mental problems with 18.5%, and 14.8% having hearing problems. While the remained disabled persons are having other disabilities such as hearing, seeing, speaking problems or disabilities... etc. Almost

50% of the disabled persons are females. In addition, almost 50% of the persons having diseases are also females.

Due to the fact that the study period was conducted in winter, the common illnesses were cold and flu; almost more than 60% of the population there had cold or flu. As for the chronic cases it used to be high, 33%, in January 2006, however, the number decreased to 15.8% in March 2006. The average of people who had other illnesses including accidents was 10.2%.

The treatment cost ranged between 2 to 333 USD per household for January 2006 depending on the illness and whether the household members had health insurance or not. However, in February and March 2006 it decreased to between 7 to 222 USD per household.

G. Education:

Generally, 22.7% of the surveyed households' members, in December 2005, are illiterate (42.9% are male and 55.1% are females) and the highest percentage was found in the Bedouin community with 51.5%, while the percentage of households' members with elementary and preparatory level of education reached to 46.8%, the households' members who are having secondary level of education reached to 17.7% and the members who are having B.A. level of education formed only 9.5% of the total members of the surveyed households while only 0.1% persons are holding master degree of education.

The survey showed that 69.6% of the pupils are studying in Governmental schools followed by private schools with 18.6% and finally the UNRWA schools with 11.8%. All types of communities are benefiting from governmental schools, while urban, rural and refugees are benefiting from private schools and only rural and refugees are benefiting from UNRWA schools.

H. Land Ownership:

The survey in December 2005 showed that only 28.8% of the surveyed households own lands. The size of ownership ranges between half dunum to 180 dunums per household with average of 24.4 dunums per household. The main owners are concentrated in the rural area and form 62.5% of the households who own lands, followed by urban households with 34.4%, Bedouins with 3.1% and the refugees don't own lands at all.

1. Plant production:

Distribution of land ownership by type of utilization shows that most of the owned lands are cultivated by olive trees forming 46.5%, followed by uncultivated lands forming

19.2%, field crops lands forming 17.1%, vegetables forming 10.3%, fruit trees forming 3.8%, while 3.1% are buildings or suitable for building. The reasons behind not cultivating part of the owned lands are due to unsuitability for cultivation forming 60% and occupation practices forming 40%.

2. Livestock activities:

Tubas district is characterized mainly as being an agricultural district, thus livestock raising and plant production are dominant work activities in this Governorate. Consequently, 24,3% of the surveyed households have goats with number of heads ranges between 2 and 200 heads/household (average of 43.3 heads/household), also 15.3% of the household have sheep with number of heads ranges between 1 and 150 heads per household (average of 30 heads per household). Additionally, 6.3% of the households have poultry with limited number of birds' ranges between 5 and 40 birds per household. Also, up to 6.3% of the households have cattle with number of heads ranges between 1-3 heads.

Sheep, goats, cattle, and poultry are mainly concentrated in the rural, urban and Bedouins households. The highest numbers of sheep and goats are owned by Bedouins followed by rural and urban households. The rural community has the largest number of cattle, followed by urban and finally Bedouins. The highest number of poultry is concentrated in rural areas followed by Bedouin, urban then refugee areas.

3. Agricultural Activities:

The analysis showed that almost 20.53% of the surveyed families had planted their lands with open field (irrigated &/or dry land) and greenhouse crops. The planted area ranged between 100 m² to 50 dunums per household. Up to 25% of the agricultural households are covering 20% - 30% of their households' needs, while 60% are covering 100% of their needs from their planted crops.

Approximately 88% of the agricultural families in January 2006 used to sell part or all of their products; however, that number dropped sharply in the next two months, where it reached 46.6% in February and 50% in March 2006. this is due to the seasonal agricultural product.

I. Quality of life:

1. Availability of luxuries:

The survey of December 2005 revealed that more than 50% of the households have television, satellite, refrigerator, and mobile. Less than 50% and above 20% of the households has private cars, telephone line and computer. While, from 1 to 19% of the surveyed households have video, internet, freezer, washing machine, and D.V.D. On the other hand air condition, Jacuzzi, and central heating are available in less than one percent to zero percent in the surveyed household.

2. Information on residency:

The survey showed that 95.6% of the families own their houses, while 5.4% of the families rent their houses. The rented households are mainly allocated in the urban and rural households, respectively. Average monthly renting cost reaches to 185 USD per house.

Based on the surveyed households in December 2005, there are three types of houses in Tubas Governorate: house, apartment, independent room and other. Equal to 65.8% of the families are living in houses and forming 74.1% of rural houses, 73.7% of refugee houses, and 16.75 of the Bedouin houses. On the other hand 18.9% of the families are living in apartments, and forming 46.4% in the urban areas, 26.3% in the refugee camp, 5.2% in the rural areas and 0% in the Bedouins community. This shows that urban areas start shifting towards constructing building apartments and complexes to invest in the space and to meet the progress of the demand on houses.

In the refugee camp, there is limited area, thus the people tried to live in small apartments. Living in independent rooms is mainly found in the rural and Bedouins communities and the people who are living in tents are mainly concentrated in the Bedouins community and who are living in simple shelters are found in both rural and Bedouins community. Generally, the quality of life decrease when going from houses and apartments towards independent rooms and other type of living conditions, therefore, 15.3% of the families are living in a low quality houses. This result is consistent with the families' answers as 11% of them have declared that their houses are in bad condition.

In addition, the interviewed families have declared the following: 19.3% of the families have houses with very good conditions, 29.7% have houses with good conditions, 39.6% have houses with fair conditions, and 10.8% have houses with bad conditions. Up to 78.6% of the urban families considered their houses in very good and good conditions, 51.7% of rural families considered their houses in fair conditions, 78.9% of the refugee camp families considered their houses in good to fair conditions, while 83.3% of the Bedouins families considered their houses in bad conditions.

On the other hand, 13% of the interviewed families are living in houses covered with stone, 37% are living in concrete houses, 47% are living in houses built from bock, and 3% are living in tents and barracks.

The survey showed that 9.6% of the families are living in housing area less than 50 m², 34.5% are living in housing area ranges between 60 and 100 m², 46.2% are living in housing area ranges between 110 and 150 m², and 9.6% are living in housing area ranges between 160 and 280 m².

All the families have mentioned that they have one kitchen, while 2% have said that they haven't toilet, 66% they have one toilet, 30% have two toilets, and 2% they have 3 toilets. Most of the houses have bathroom, but it mainly contains toilet and bathroom together.

Additionally, 63% of the households have internal water network while 37% of them haven't internal water network.

J. Infrastructure:

1. Water:

All the urban and refugee households are totally connected to the public water network, however, only 48.7% of rural households are connected to the water network, and the Bedouins' community is completely unconnected to the water public network. Up to 58.6% of the households have water harvesting cisterns, and they are mainly found in the urban and rural communities and less available in Bedouins community and completely unavailable in refugee camp. On the other hand, 45.6% of the household are depending on water tanks as main source of water or during the months where water resources become insufficient. Also, 16% of the households are depending on springs and wells as main and/or supplementary source of water.

2. Electricity:

Regarding the distribution of connected households with electricity based on type of sources, 82.5% of the houses are connected with electricity public network, while 12.6% are connected to private Generator, and 4.5% of the houses are completely unconnected to electricity. The private generators are located mainly in the rural communities and the houses without electricity are mainly located in the Bedouins community.

K. Impact of Occupation practices:

During December 2005, up to 16% of the surveyed households had lost some of their working days in Israel due to the closure with an average of 14 working days per family, which represent an average loss of 1235 NIS/month. This affects the economic stability and purchasing power of the Palestinian households especially among those who are dependent upon work on the Israeli side or have business relationship with the Israelis.

The Israeli forces have confiscated lands from 12.6% of the surveyed households and they are concentrated in rural and urban communities. The Israeli forces have claimed the reasons for confiscating 71% of the Palestinian lands for establishing or expanding the Israeli colonies in the West Bank, while the rest is for the construction of segregation wall and military bases with 14.5% each. The total confiscated area reached to 1830 dunums with a total value of 135,000 USD. One of the interviewed families has lost 800 dunums through the confiscation procedures while the losses of other households ranged between 10 and 200 dunums.

Up to 15.3% of the surveyed households, their lands were bulldozed and their crops were destroyed. Of the total bulldozed and destroyed crops, 10.7% was olive and other fruit

trees (Up to 260 fruit trees were uprooted), followed with vegetables (32.1%) and the field crops (57.2%). The total losses and the value of bulldozed crops and trees reached up to 10,600 USD.

The Occupation activities have reached the Palestinian houses, as 5% of the surveyed households' houses were demolished partially or completely by the Israeli military bulldozers or explosives. Thus, these families have lost their homes and became homeless and they need years over years to rebuild simple houses to host them. The area of the destroyed buildings has ranged between 70 m² and 200 m² per household with average value of 157 USD/m² for destroyed buildings.

During January 2006, around 4.5% of the surveyed households had lost some of their working days in Israel due to the closure with an average of 10 working days per family which represent an average loss of 700 NIS/month/affected household compared with 16% of surveyed households in December 2005, losing 14 working days per household and an average 1235 NIS. This affects the economic stability and purchasing power of the Palestinian households especially those who are economically dependant on work in Israel or have business relationship with the Israelis.

1% (one household) of the surveyed households, received a military order to leave their agricultural land, and were told that if they did not, the Israeli occupation forces would destroy their greenhouses and crops.

During February 2006, none of the people working in Israel lost any of their working days due to the closure. Also, none of the surveyed households were affected by the occupation practices such as land confiscation, house demolitions and/or crop destruction. Nevertheless, during March 2006, 1.8% (2 households) of the interviewed households suffered land confiscation by the Israeli military forces.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations:

During the study period the average monthly income in Tubas was 1624 NIS. Comparing it to the average monthly income in the Palestinian Territories, which is 2337 NIS, shows that Tubas is still vulnerable.

Depending on Agriculture as the main source of income, Tubas proved to be a rural community, and any obstacles facing agricultural sector will result in worsening the already vulnerable status of the communities there.

In addition, there is a desperate need for improvements in the infrastructure and available services for the rural communities, which are the majority, as they are far from such services, and they face many difficulties reaching to them in the main cities due to the checkpoints created by the Israeli soldiers.

Furthermore, these checkpoints and all the other Israeli practices against the Palestinian population are causing so much devastation not only to the infrastructure but also to the farms and jobs, and also are slowly disconnecting the communities from one another.

This survey included new socioeconomic parameter in communities. These are so important when measuring the vulnerability and food security. Thus we recommend to extend the period of study, and also to apply this study to other governorates.

The importance of extending the duration of such studies goes to the fact that the Palestinian community is still going through continuous changes due to the unstable political situation, therefore, it is important to extend the period of study to try examine the response of the communities to the change in the social, economic, and political situations, for there is a need to follow their impact on households and community level.

On the other hand, the development of the website is very important for the project, considering this website to be a pioneer having such integrated data on governorates, communities, and households levels in the Palestinian Territories.

To improve its function and impact, continuous updating is necessary. This website does not only display information about Tubas, but it also displays fact sheet for other governorates. Therefore, it is considered to be a preliminary stage for developing an integrated socioeconomic surveillance system for all the Palestinian Territories.