



## What constitutes poverty in rural Sindh?

### Key findings of the socio- economic baseline survey 2016

Poverty is a manifest deprivation in human welfare, and a multidimensional phenomenon. In addition to the lack of 'roti (food), kapra (clothing) aur makan (and house)' — the basic rights — it also includes the lack of 'capability' — to overcome illness, hunger, violence, ignorance and injustice. Poverty means the absence of opportunity, empowerment and security, and not just the absence of food on the table.

According to the official multidimensional poverty index (2016), 4 out of 10 Pakistanis live in poverty with 43% of population of Sindh province living in poverty. With uneven national geography of poverty, 9.3 % poor live in urban areas as compared to 54.6% in rural areas. The Sindh Union Council and Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) Programme aims (2015-2021) to support the Government of Sindh in developing its Community-Driven Local Development (CDLD) policy, allowing for a wider geographical outreach and providing financial means to impact poverty reduction in rural Sindh.

This research brief presents key findings from the socio-economic baseline survey undertaken in the two rural union councils (UCs) namely Dad Khan Jarwar and Masoo Bozdar, tehsil Chamber, district Tando Allahyar from June 26 to September 2, 2016, under the research component of the SUCCESS programme.

#### OBJECTIVE

To track the socioeconomic status of the sample households on annual basis by measuring the change in expenditure, access to public services, and women's health and decision making in household matters and other demographic indicators relating to quality of life<sup>1</sup>.

#### METHODOLOGY

The survey was undertaken with a sample of 2,298 households spread in the two UCs. One fifth (20%) of the sample households had a poverty score of 0-23 (obtained through the Poverty Score Card survey) while 80% households were randomly sampled. As part of the research component under the SUCCESS Programme, a randomised control trial has been set up in these UCs, where some settlements will receive the intervention early and others with a delay of 2 years calculated from the date of the first intervention in treatment villages. Poverty Score Card (PSC) is a tool to measure change in poverty by providing data on 12 key indicators that include among others household size, type of housing and toilet facilities, education, child status, household assets, agricultural landholding, and livestock ownership. PSC is also used by Benazir Income Support Programme, the Government of Pakistan social protection programme<sup>2</sup>.

With extremely uneven geography of poverty,

**54.6%**

of the poor live in rural areas as compared to

**9.3%**

in urban areas

Survey was undertaken with a sample of

**2,298**

households

1. The complete report of the survey can be accessed at <http://success.org.pk/index.php/research-category/reports/>

2. <http://bisp.gov.pk/poverty-scorecard/> accessed on May 17, 2017

## KEY FINDINGS

The survey covered a population of 14,822 individuals including 7,667 males, and 7,155 females. On the whole, the access to education, health and public services does not vary between the group with PSC score 0-23 and PSC score 24. This is so as the whole surveyed households live in the same locale, the area lacks basic infrastructure and essential facilities.

### Poverty status

Two poverty measures are reported in this brief; head count ratio and severity of poverty. The Head count ratio (HCR) is a simple measure of poverty that shows the proportion of a population that lives below the defined income poverty line<sup>3</sup>. In the sample, 588 (26%) households live below the official income poverty line. This is less than the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index,<sup>4</sup> adopted by the Government of Pakistan, of Tando Allahyar according to which 36.6% (2014-15) of the district population is poor. This index is different from the simple income poverty measure as it takes into account deprivation in health, education and standard of living.

How poor are the poor? To find out the inequality among the poor, the Squared Poverty Gap or Severity of Poverty index is obtained by squaring the Poverty Gap Index. The overall Severity of Poverty among the poor is 15%. It means 15% out of the total 26% poor households are extremely poor, far below the poverty line. Households having PSC 0-23 have higher severity of poverty (17%) than those having PSC 24 and above who have just 3% Severity of Poverty.

### Demography

The average household size in the selected UCs is 6.4 persons and the sex ratio (male: female) is 107:100. In line with popular view that larger household size tends to be a characteristic of the poor, people in low poverty band have larger family size (6.9) than with the people in higher poverty band (5.9).

Is this large family size related to the unmet family planning need? Probably yes, because majority of the households (55.7%) have not used any contraceptive method. This could be because of lack of knowledge, availability, or other reasons. As per the baseline survey, among those not using contraceptive method, more than one third of the women (37.3%) want more children followed by 20.3% who lack knowledge about contraception. However, little over one tenth of the women (11.4%) do not use contraceptive methods due to perception of adverse side effects. Only 2.5% quote religious reasons for not using any contraceptive method.

In terms of sources of income, poor tend to have less diversified sources of income. However, without any significant difference among those likely to be poor (with PSC score below 23) and those not likely to be poor (PSC score 24 and above), it was established that a majority of the working population (55.2%) is engaged in unskilled labour and almost one fifth of the household members (19.0%) are engaged in farm labour. However, only 4% of the people are involved in skilled labour.

### Education status

Non-literacy or low education status is another characteristic of the poor. In both categories, PSC score 0-23, and above, just one out of four adults (23.7%) is literate including male (23.8%) and female (23.5%). This literacy level is relatively higher for the rural part of the Sindh since literacy here is defined as ability to read and write in any language unlike other definitions of literacy where literacy is restricted to certain years of primary schooling. Apparently, no discrimination against females is observed in adult literacy status.

Households having PSC  
**0-23**  
have higher severity of poverty  
**17%**  
than those having PSC  
**24 and above**  
who have just  
**3% Severity of Poverty**

Living space is extremely congested as  
**91%**  
of the households have just two rooms

Poor have less diversified resources of income with  
**55.2%**  
engaged in unskilled labour

Nearly one fifth  
**19%**  
are engaged in farm labour

3. Using 2013-14 data, the official Poverty Line was calculated as Pak Rs 3,030 per adult equivalent per month. This Poverty line was adjusted to the Consumer Price Index 2015-16 and calculated to Pak Rs. 3248.48

4. <http://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/06/20/pakistan-s-new-poverty-index-reveals-that-4-out-of-10-pakistanis-live-in-multidimensional-poverty.html> accessed July 10, 2017

**Just one out  
of four adults  
23.7%  
is literate  
including male  
23.8%  
and female  
23.5%**

---

**Nearly three fourth  
71%  
of the total  
expenditure on  
food, outweighs  
all expenses  
including health  
and education**

---

**Almost half of  
the women  
47.3%  
think private  
health facility as  
the best place to  
deliver the baby**

Usually, the poor's children lag behind in educational attainment. The total number of school age (4-17 years) children is 6,284, out of which 4,825 children are not going to school. More than three fourth of the sample households' children (76.8%) are not in school. Among them are 76.7% male children and 77.0% female children. The question here arises about why parents do not send their children to school? Surely, it is not only about the quality of the schools as such, as the baseline survey results show that nearly three fourth (71.8%) of the households are satisfied with the services of the available schools. One explanation for this high rate of satisfaction despite dismal education status, people are entrapped in low aspiration cycle with no or minimum hope to progress. Distance also matters as 10.1% of the parents whose children are not enrolled in any school, think that the school is located far away<sup>5</sup>.

Apparently, no discrimination against female education is observed in children education status even though head of the household (42%) alone, mostly father, makes decision whether the female would seek education or not.

#### **Expenditure priorities**

Food expenditure, three fourth (71%) of the total expenditure, outweighs all other expenses. After food, the next highest head of expenditure is fuel that takes 11% of the overall expenditure share. Related to low education profile of the two union councils, only one percent of the expenditure goes to education.

#### **Status of basic infrastructure and public services**

Due to prevalent poverty conditions, and a lack of infrastructure, room ownership among the surveyed population is quite low, as 91% of the households have just two rooms. Only 3% of the households having PSC score 0-23 have three to four rooms while the same percentage is more than double (7%) for the households having PSC score 24 and above. Regarding homelessness, 1 % of the sample population does not have any room to live in. These people have been seen living in shabby tents.

More than two third (69%) of the households in the UCs do not have access to piped water and depend on hand pump for all of their water needs available in their dwellings. Canal water is hardly available in the area with only 1% access to canal water. The area has insufficient hygiene conditions with half the households not having a latrine (53%). Over half of the households (55.5%) are not satisfied with the available road infrastructure in the area. Similarly, nearly 4 out every 10 households (39.2%) are not satisfied with the bus facility in the area. Also, drinking water is also an issue as 39.1% of the households are not satisfied with the drinking water facility available to their families.

Private sector health providers appear to crowd out public health in terms of maternity services. Almost half of the women (47.3%) think private facility as the best place to deliver the baby followed by nearly one fourth (23.2%) who considered home as the best place for delivery assisted by a Dai/Traditional Birth Attendant. However, some of the basic services like Lady Health Worker, Basic Health Unit and Family Planning Unit have shown signs of improvement. During the last one year, 35.2% of the households think that the quality of lady health service has improved and two third (66.9%) of the households are satisfied with the Lady Health Service. Majority of the household, 78.1%, 77.6% and 81.4% of the households are satisfied with the Basic Health Unit, Family Planning Unit, vaccinator services, respectively. Due to distance, 10.1%, 3.9% and 7.4% of the household are unable to avail the services of the Basic Health Unit, Family Planning Unit and vaccinator, respectively.

The national identity card provider service, NADRA, one third (32.8%) are not satisfied with the services of NADRA. Despite local government elections just before this survey, almost two fifth (38.5%) of the households are not satisfied with services of the union council office.

---

5. There must be other reasons for this low literacy in the area and low enrolment in schools, see a related policy brief on <http://success.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Policy-Brief-V2.pdf> to find out more about these reasons and possible pathways to overcome these barriers.

Similarly, over half of the households (54.7%) are not satisfied with services from the local government. Showing an overall lack of trust, less than one-fifth (16.8%) of the respondents reported that they fully trust in local elected representatives to address their local problems. Only half (49.5%) of the respondents reported that working of the government is somewhat transparent and corruption free. Most of the respondents (72%) reported no change in the quality of public services because of local government formation.

Unlike popular perception that rural communities would have usually high level of mutual trust among themselves due to economic inter-dependence in everyday life, only one-third (32.6%) of the households think that people around them can be fully trusted.

### Hygiene status

Likelihood of being poor is directly related with the capacity of the household to have a latrine. About two third (61%) of the households having PSC 0-23 do not have a latrine whereas, people having PSC 24 and above, 42% do not have latrine. Only 39% of the households have proper drainage facilities.

### Source of energy needs

Majority of the households have access to electricity, only 28% have no access to electricity. However, likelihood of being poor matters in determining access to electricity. The households having PSC 0-23, 35% do not have access to electricity. Households having PSC 24 and above, only 19% do not have access to electricity.

Majority of the sample households (67%) burn wood as fuel for cooking and heating purposes. Linked to likelihood of being poor, those having PSC 23 and above, less of them (55%) rely on firewood as compared to 75 % of those having PSC 0-23 rely on wood for fuel purpose.

### Preliminary conclusion and looking forward

Large investments are required in public infrastructure on supply side but more so in governance systems so as to improve education<sup>6</sup>, health, transport, income generating activities in the area. In addition to improvement in public services, a large room also exists for awareness raising among ordinary citizens to turn them into active citizens that are aware of their basic rights and hold their public office holders accountable. Community-driven development approach involving civil society organisations to complement and supplement the public services by working at the grassroots level with communities may foster the pace of change in the lives of rural communities by changing their perception, culture and behaviour towards life in this development journey.

As the SUCCESS Programme is rolled out and programme interventions are offered to the communities, changes in socio-economic status of the communities will be traced through annual baseline surveys and life histories collected through ethnographic field studies. Finding of this research will be shared through publication of policy briefs, research papers, newspaper articles and through SUCCESS programme website from time to time.

6. The Sindh government has increased the allocation for education by 24pc in the current budget (2017-2018).

**61%**  
of the households  
having PSC 0-23  
do not have a  
latrine

**28%**  
of the households have  
no access to electricity.

### Credits:

This Research Brief has been written by Dr Abdur Rehman Cheema, Team Leader Research, SUCCESS. Mr. Khaleel Ahmed Tetlay, Chief Operating Officer RSPN, Mr. Fazal Ali Saadi, Programme Manager SUCCESS, RSPN provided useful comments. Ms. Filza Nasir, Documentation and Reporting Officer SUCCESS edited this brief. The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of RSPN or the European Union.

This research brief has been prepared under the research component of the Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) programme. SUCCESS is a six-year long (2015-2021) programme funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO) and Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) in eight districts of Sindh, namely: Kambar Shahdadt, Larkana, Dadu, Jamshoro, Matiari, Sujawal, Tando Allahyar and Tando Muhammad Khan.



EUROPEAN UNION

"This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union."

More information about the European Union is available on:

Web: <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/pakistan/>

Twitter: EUPakistan

Facebook: [European-Union-in-Pakistan/269745043207452](https://www.facebook.com/European-Union-in-Pakistan/269745043207452)



Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme

Office No. G-3, Islamabad Stock Exchange Towers 55-B, Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, Islamabad

Ph: 92-51-2894060-3 Fax: 92-51-289064

URL: [www.success.org.pk](http://www.success.org.pk)

Facebook.com/successprogramme

Twitter @successprog



House No.7, Street 49, F-6/4 Islamabad, Pakistan  
92-51-2829141 | 2829556 | 2822476 | 2826792 | 2821736  
[info@rspn.org.pk](mailto:info@rspn.org.pk)