

# Baseline Study of the Nuton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project (NJLIP)



Prepared for



**Social Development Foundation (SDF)**

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**HDRC** **Human Development Research Centre**  
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The Social Development Foundation (SDF)—an autonomous not-for-profit organization of Government of Bangladesh (GoB) under the Ministry of Finance (MoF)—was established in the year of 2001 to promote community-based initiatives focusing the needs of the poor and disadvantaged groups—particularly *women* and *youths*. The mandate of SDF is to contribute in poverty alleviation in Bangladesh through empowering the poor and financing their development activities using Community Driven Development (CDD). As its continuous development endeavors, SDF initiated a 6-year long extensive “Nuton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project (NJLIP)” in August 2015. The Project Development Objective is to improve the livelihoods of the poor and extreme poor in the project areas.

SDF entrusted Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) to perform this herculean task of a baseline study for NJLIP. This baseline survey is essential to document critical indicators under each of the relevant variables related to the present phenomena and lay the benchmark for assessing project performances at later stages. This study is very much important to SDF, as the baseline data will not only be used to compare with the mid- and end-of-term data, but also will be used for internal progress monitoring.

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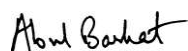
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## ABBREVIATIONS

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
CBN	Cost of Basic Need
CC	Community Clinic
CDD	Community Driven Development
CG	Community Group
CHTDF	Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility
CHTWCA	CHT Watershed Co-management Activity
CISF	Community Infrastructure Support Fund
CI	Confidence Interval
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
COM	Community Operational Manual
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DCI	Direct Calorie Intake
DCI	Data Collection Instrument
EoI	Expression of Interest
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FYP	Five-Year Plan
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GS	Gram Samiti
HCR	Head Count Ratio
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
HI	Happiness Index
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HQ	Head Quarter
HSH	Haig-Simons-Hicks
HYV	High Yielding Variety
IDF	Institutional Development Fund
KII	Key Informant Interview
LFS	Labour Force Survey
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NJG	Nuton Jibon Group
NJLIP	Nuton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
NTVQF	National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PDO	Project Development Objective
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PUO	Pyrexia of Unknown Origin
RNF	Rural Non-farm

SCI	Social Capital Index
SDF	Social Development Foundation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SF	Shabolombi Fund
SIPP	Social Investment Program Project
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SSNP	Social Safety Net Programmes
SSS	Social Security System
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UHC	Union Health Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
VDF	Village Development Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WFS	World Food Summit
WHO	World Health Organization
WHR	World Happiness Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Study Background, Objectives and Methodology

Social Development Foundation (SDF) set off a 6-year long extensive “Nuton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project (NJLIP)” to perk up the livelihoods of the poor and extreme poor in 12 districts of the country in August 2015. The NJLIP aims at providing support — such as development of community institutions, livelihood and business development and institutional strengthening — to around 500,000 extreme poor and poor households in 2500 villages under poverty-prone Upazilas of Bagerhat, Barisal, Pirojpur, Mymensingh, Sherpur, Sylhet, Rangpur, Chandpur, Comilla, Shariatpur, Khulna and Satkhira. To document critical indicators under each of the relevant variables related to the present phenomena of NJLIP and lay the benchmark for assessing project performances at later stages, SDF commissioned Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) to conduct a baseline survey of the project. The specific objective of this survey is to establish baseline data of the pre-project status on key indicators, pertinent to the objectives of each component and sub-component of NJLIP, against which the impact of the project can be measured in future.

The survey covered all the 12 intervention districts of NJLIP. As the project had already been initiated, most of the data and information were collected through memory recall method, except those on food intake, nutrition and a few issues related to health. The baseline survey was undertaken within the project areas (intervention) as well as in the areas (control) where project implementation will not take place in near future. The quantitative sample size of households was large enough to represent intervention and control groups — total 7,558 households (Intervention: 3,780 and Control: 3,778) were selected from 378 villages (Intervention: 189 and Control: 189) using statistically valid procedures and methods. Both quantitative and qualitative tools and methods have been applied in the survey. Primary data collection took place in February, March and April 2017 involving over 40 trained data collection staffs.

The baseline study report comprises twenty chapters in five broad parts and they are—Part A: Introduction to the Study; Part B: Resource Endowment and Human Capital; Part C: Livelihood Strategies; Part D: Livelihood Outcomes; and Part E: Conclusion. The findings of the baseline survey — delineated in three parts: B, C and D — are related with the relevant indicators of the Results Framework of NJLIP. Some ‘direct’ base line findings — linked with the indicators of Results Framework — are mentioned in following Matrix 1.

Matrix 1: Baseline findings of some indicators of Results Framework

Indicator Level	Indicators	Baseline findings
Project Development Objective	Beneficiary households with an incremental income increase of at least 30%	Average household income of the intervention households was Tk. 86,910 — highest Tk. 123,013 at Shariatpur and lowest Tk. 54,251 at Sherpur.
Intermediate Result 1: Community Institutions and Livelihood and Development	Nutrition-intervention target households using hand washing stations before food preparation and feeding infants and young children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of 19.3 per cent intervention households washed their hands before taking food.</li> <li>Members of 8.6 per cent intervention households washed their hands before feeding baby.</li> <li>Members of 13 per cent intervention households washed their hands before serving meals.</li> </ul>

Indicator Level	Indicators	Baseline findings
	Number of pregnant women and mothers participating in child nutrition activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last pregnant women of 10.7 per cent intervention households took iron tablet.</li> <li>• Last pregnant women of 7.2 per cent intervention households consumed additional food.</li> <li>• Last pregnant women of 2.1 per cent intervention households had four pre-birth check-ups.</li> <li>• Last pregnant women of 1.5 per cent intervention households had more than four pre-birth check-ups.</li> <li>• Last pregnant women of 1.6 per cent intervention households had two post-birth check-ups.</li> <li>• Last pregnant women of 0.6 per cent intervention households had more than two post-birth check-ups.</li> <li>• Last born child of 14.9 per cent intervention households was fed colostrums.</li> <li>• Last born child of 12.7 per cent intervention households was having exclusive breastfeeding</li> <li>• Last born child of 1.5 per cent intervention households was having breastfeeding, along with water and honey</li> <li>• Last born child of 2.1 per cent intervention households was having breastfeeding, along with other supplementary food.</li> </ul>
Intermediate Result 2: Business Development and Institutional Strengthening	Youth employed through project facilitation and sustained for at least one year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 42.5 per cent youth of intervention households were involved in wage employment.</li> <li>• A 42.9 per cent youth of intervention households were involved in self employment.</li> </ul>

## Some Other Key Findings

### Baseline Survey Summary Statistics

Observation Measurement Unit: Indicators	Intervention	Control
<b>HOUSEHOLD (HH)</b>		
<b>Socio-demographic</b>		
Average HH size	4.5	4.2
Female-headed HH (% total HH)	11.7	14.8
Mean age of population (yrs)	27.2	27.4
Disable HH member (% of total members)	1.4	1.6
HH having non-resident income (%)	11	13.1
<b>Education Status</b>		
Literacy Rate (among 7 years and above; %)	58.4	53.8
Adult Literacy Rate (among 15 years and above; %)	55.7	50.7
Mean years of schooling	3.9	3.4
HH member with no education (%)	29.2	33.1
Primary complete HH member (%)	13.5	13.9
<b>Income Generating Activities-Related Training</b>		
HH having at least one member received at least one training (%)	2.1	2.8
HH received training from NGO (%)	57.3	75.4

Observation Measurement Unit: Indicators	Intervention	Control
<b>Asset Ownership</b>		
HH average land possession (decimal)	17.3	15.3
HH average land ownership (decimal)	16	12.9
HH average valuation of assets (Tk.)	3,21,211	2,33,546
Landless HH (decimal; including homestead land)	91.7	94.0
HH having electricity connection (%)	59.8	58.2
<b>Employment Status</b>		
HH members engaged in wage-employment (%)	71	74.6
HH members engaged in self-employment (%)	38.7	35.4
Average daily wage (Tk.)	303	300
<b>Involvement with Agriculture</b>		
HH members engaged in agriculture <sup>1</sup> (%)	71.6	70.2
Possessing both livestock and poultry (%)	23.9	22.6
Cultivating any aqua-products (%)	10.7	8.2
<b>Savings and Credit</b>		
HH had savings (%)	48.7	49.7
Average savings (Tk.)	2,548	2,019
HH Access to credit (%)	50.7	52.4
Average credit (Tk.)	15,707	13,603
<b>Social Safety Net Programmes</b>		
HH receiving benefits from SSNPs (%)	41	47.4
Disable persons receiving benefits from SSNPs (%)	20.3	24.1
Older age people receiving benefits from SSNPs (%)	29.2	40.6
<b>Social Capital and Access to Institution</b>		
Average number of institutions accessed by HHs	3.7	3.6
HHs index of social capital strength	3.9	3.8
<b>Infrastructures</b>		
Village had government primary school (%)	68.8	74.6
Village had Community clinics (%)	13.8	11.1
<b>Access to Agricultural Market</b>		
Participation in crops/vegetables/fruits market (%)	60.2	56.6
Participation in livestock/poultry market (%)	12.2	12.5
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
HH average yearly net income (Tk.)	86,910	84,285
HH annual average expenditure (Tk.)	85,652	79,606
<b>Food Security and Nutrition Status</b>		
HH food intake of energy (K.cal/person/day)	37.8	40.4
Average number of food insecure days in a year	9.8	10.7
Accurate knowledge on selected 8 nutrition issues	1.8	2.0
<b>Health and Hygiene</b>		
At least 1 sick member in last four weeks preceding the survey (%)	70.8	63.7
Immunization status of under 5 children	43.5	40.3
Accurate knowledge on selected 5 hygiene issues	81.4	78.3
<b>Women Empowerment</b>		
Average age of woman last married	16.1	16.7

**Household Demographic Characteristics:** Average household size was slightly higher in intervention (4.5) than control area (4.2). Over 80 per cent of households were male-headed. Mean age of population was 27 years. The highest share of population was found in the age group of 10-14 years. Dependency ratio was more than 40 per cent in both intervention and control households. Disaggregation of unemployed members in household by sex indicates predominantly male-biased (above 90%).

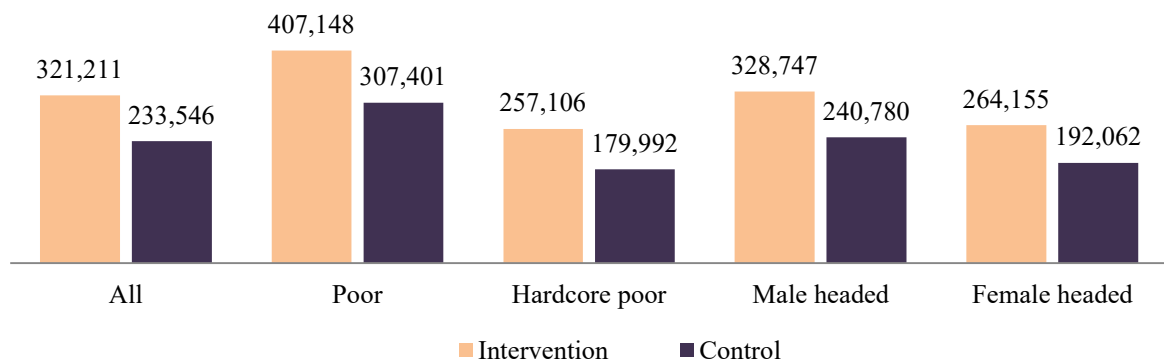
<sup>1</sup> Cultivating any crops/vegetables/fruits.

**Household Education Status:** Literacy rate, across the intervention and control households, was about 50 per cent. Mean years of schooling for the members aged 7 years and above was approximately 4 years in intervention and slightly over 3 years in control households. Completion of primary education was within 13 per cent in both areas. Inability to bear the education expenditure was reported as the most prominent reason for drop outs from school as well as for not attending in schools - around 50 per cent in both areas.

**Income Generating Activities-related Training:** Only less than 3 per cent of households reported to have members who received such training. Less than 3 per cent household youth members received income generation related training. Majority (*among the training recipients*) received trainings from NGOs. Almost all of the recipients reported that the trainings were useful for them in generating income.

**Household Asset Holding Status:** Though almost all the households surveyed—irrespective of intervention or control— owned a home to live-in, in most cases, the condition of housing was not good at all. More than nine-tenths of the households were landless, with meager amount of land. Interestingly, more than nine-tenths of the total household asset value had been formed with the land-value; which indicates that they possessed very little productive assets.

Figure 1: Valuation of household assets (in BDT)

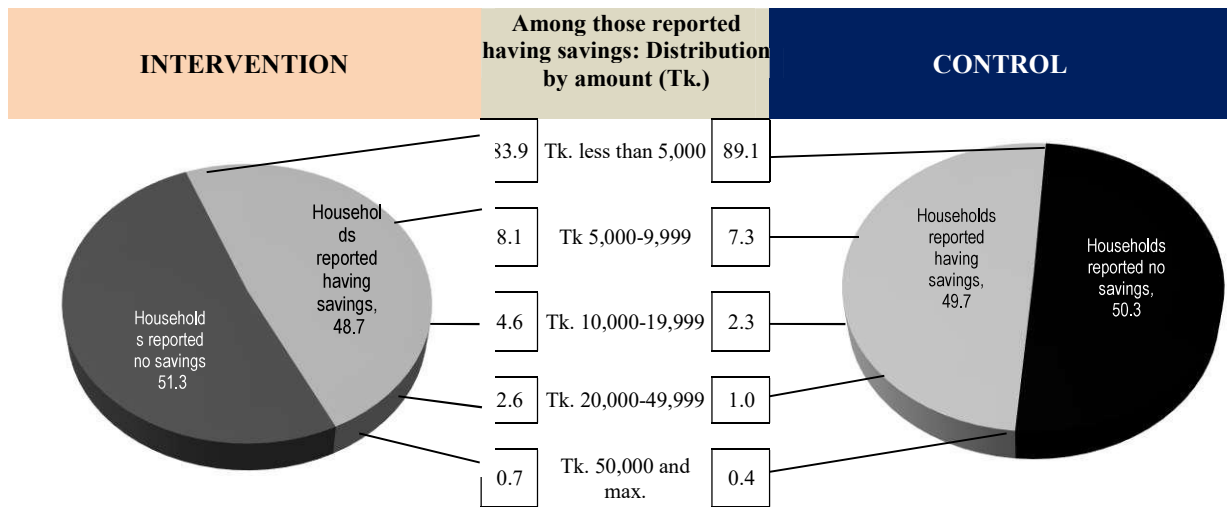


**Household Employment Status:** Household members were involved in wage-employment activities (Intervention: 71%, Control: 74.6%) in larger extent, compared to the self-employment activities (Intervention: 38.7%, Control: 35.4%). Average daily wage of the wage labor households in intervention (Tk. 303) and control (Tk. 300) was found to be quite low and same. Acute gender discrimination prevailed in wage-payment to women.

**Household Involvement with Agriculture:** About 70 per cent of households were found to cultivate any one of crops or vegetables or fruits but the household agriculture was rice dependent. Average number of milking days per milking cow in a year was slightly higher in control households — 152.1 days against 147.9 days of intervention. Intervention households cultivated fish in larger extent compared to control households.

**Household Savings and Credit Status:** Around 50 per cent households did not or could not save or take loan. Average amount of savings of intervention households was Tk. 2,548. Over 70 per cent households saved in NGOs. Average amount of credit of intervention households was Tk. 15,707. Among the households who took credit, over 80 per cent took that from NGOs.

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of households in intervention and control according to their amount of savings (Tk.)



**Household Access to Social Safety Net Programmes:** All the households were poor or extreme poor but majority did not receive any benefit from the safety net programmes. A total of 1,875 older people (65 years and above) and 489 persons with disabilities were found but majority were found to be deprived of relevant safety net benefits. Access status to social safety net programmes was dominated by the *stipend for students*.

**Social Capital and Household Access to Institution:** Social Capital Index (SCI) was below average (less than 5 out of 10; in fact less than 4 in most cases) across type of households both in intervention and control group, which indicates a low stock of social capital in the communities under the survey. At least one household member accessed to around 3.5 institutes on average in the reference year. In the top-10 reported institutes as per the needs of the respondents’ households—in around one-ninth of the cases they received the services which they sought; except *Union Parishad* and *office of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer*.

**Infrastructure, Environment and Disaster Situation in the Villages:** In majority villages, there was no infrastructure to provide ante-natal or post-natal care; people had to travel for more than an hour to get those services. To cope up with the disasters, villagers took loan mostly from NGOs.

**Household Access to Agricultural Commodity Market:** Around 60 per cent households were found to sell any one or more of the crops or vegetables or fruits. But male-headed households were ahead of female-headed households and poor households were ahead of extreme poor households in this particular market participation. Price failure or not getting suitable price, market distance and bad state of transportation and roads were the three leading barriers to market development. The youth community, especially the male youth, seem to have the potentials to combat these barriers.

**Household Income and Expenditure:** A large part (48.9%) of the total net income came from wage employment. In both groups—intervention and control—the highest portion of household expenditure (24.7% for intervention and 26.7% for control) had been used to repay the loan.

Figure 3: Distribution of household yearly net income by source among INTERVENTION households

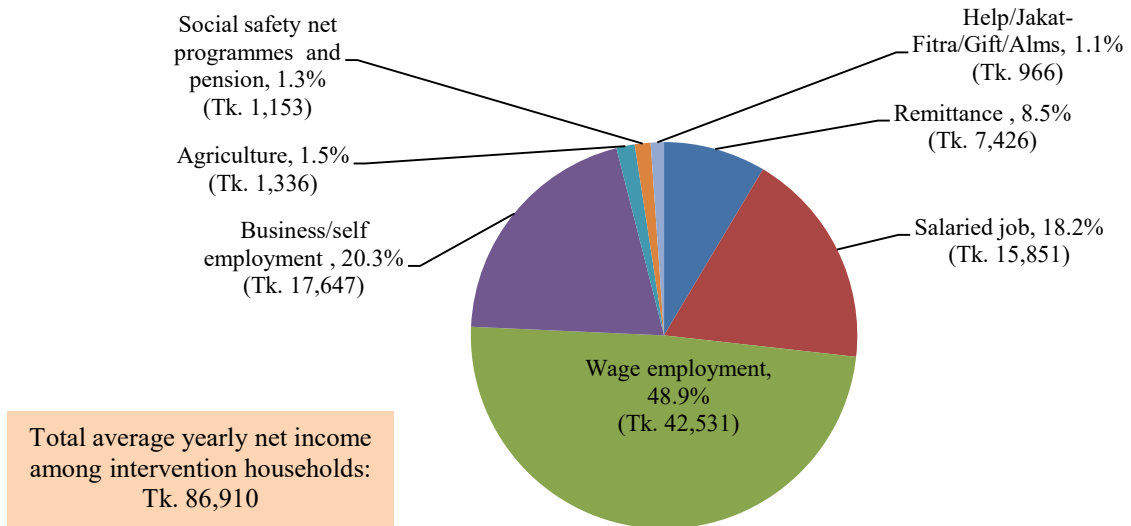
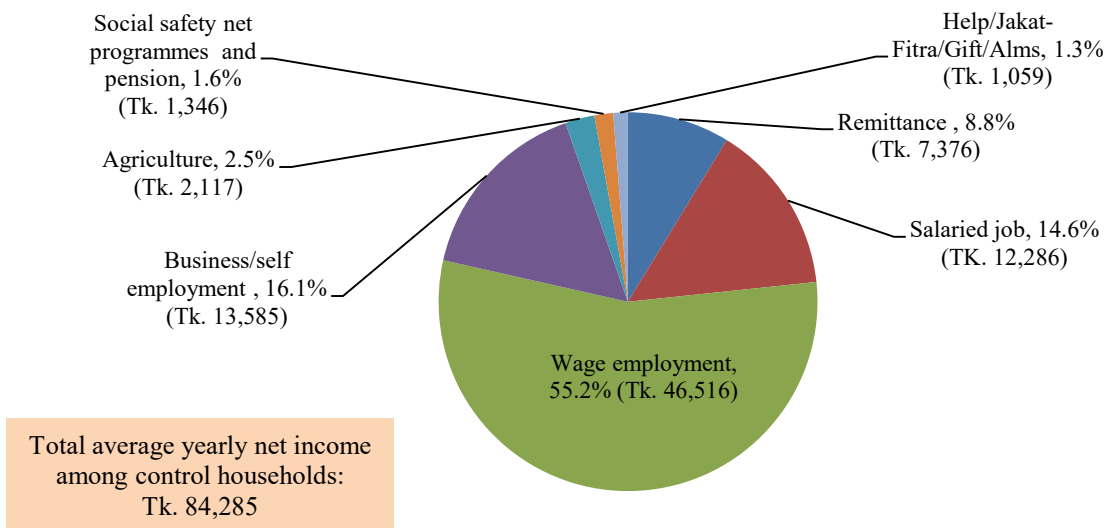


Figure 4: Distribution of household yearly net income by source among CONTROL households



**Household Food Security and Nutrition Status:** Over one-third of households were below the line of 2,122 k.cal. consumption (per person per day). Over one-tenth households had no money or resources to buy food. Around 7 per cent household members went to sleep being hungry. Around 10 ‘food insecure’ days in a year was found among the households. Very few respondents were found to have knowledge on all eight nutrition issues. Over one-tenth households were not accustomed to have any check-up during the last pregnancy.

**Health and Hygiene:** Having at least one sick member at the household was slightly higher in intervention than that in control area. Female members fell into illness more than the male members in both areas. The common age bracket of the ill members was between 36 and 50 years in both areas. Reportedly, the major illnesses was ‘Fever of unknown origin’ (or PUO) followed by ‘cold and cough’ in both areas. Loss of days due to diseases and/or illness was 7 days on average in both areas. Maintaining the practice of hygiene issues was less observed among the respondents.

**Women Empowerment:** Women could make decisions on children’s education, household matters and familial issues but could not make major decisions on the marriage of their daughters. Making decisions on visiting own parents at their home and visiting neighbors were much pronounced; contrarily going out of home for work was less pronounced. Most of the women could control their savings, take credit, decide on selling out household assets and products but only 5 per cent (or less) of the women could decide on selling out lands. As practicing the women rights issue, discussing the topic of ‘marriage’ with female members of household and issue of marriage with the marriageable daughters was observed among less than 50 per cent of the women in both areas. Average age of the girls last married in the households was 16 years in both areas. Incidences of paying dowry at the time of marriage of daughters were prevalent (responses from over 40% in both areas).

**Poverty:** The overall situation of poverty-dimensions—assessed through twelve selected indicators on *disability, unemployment, education, household assets, and women empowerment* —was gloomy in the baseline phase. Three or more than three of the mentioned indicators were found in almost all the households surveyed (Intervention: 98.9%, Control: 99.1%). Six or more than six of the above mentioned indicators were found in nearly half of the households (Intervention: 50.0%, Control: 47.5%). In the intervention group, 29.2 per cent households identified themselves as ‘poor, but satisfied’; where the rest 70.8 per cent identified themselves ‘poor and dissatisfied’. This pattern was similar both in intervention and control.

**Perception on Happiness:** State of happiness was very low among both the intervention and control group. The overall happiness index is only 1.3 in intervention and 0.8 in control—which are very close to the ‘completely unhappy state’ (The Index Scale being ‘10’ for ‘very happy’ and ‘0’ for completely unhappy).

Figure 5: Overall Happiness Index by type of respondents  
(10= Happiest state; 0= Completely unhappy state)

