

Report on Baseline Survey of SWAPNO II

Submitted to:

**Local Government Division, MoLGRD&C
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**
Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO)
DPHE Bhaban (8th Floor)
14 Shahid Captain Mansur Ali Sharani,
Kakrail, Dhaka 1000

Submitted by

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Acknowledgement

Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) is a poverty alleviation project under implementation in 99 Union Parishads (UP) of Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha and Jamalpur districts in its third phase. The Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C) implements the SWAPNO project in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The purpose of this baseline survey is to establish benchmarks of the prevailing situation of the project before the project interventions and to serve as the basis for impact assessment of the project's interventions. Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) has successfully conducted the baseline survey. The baseline survey has covered 34 project unions under three districts.

We are greatly indebted to SWAPNO, UNDP, and the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C) for entrusting us with the responsibility to undertake this baseline assignment. With the continuous and prompt support of the SWAPNO team, we were able to complete the household-level baseline survey successfully.

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Professor Dr Abul Barkat
Study Team Leader

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Abbreviations

BCG	Bacille Calmette Guerin
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BMI	Body Mass Index
DPT	Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
FFW	Food for Work
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FWC	Family Welfare Centre
G2P	Government-to-Person
GO	Government Organization
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GR	Gratuitous Relief
HAZ	Height-for-Age Z-score
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
HFIAS	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale
HH	Household
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGD	Local Government Division
LPL	Lower Poverty Line
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MoLGRD&C	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
OPV	Oral Polio Vaccine
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
QUAL	Qualitative
QUANT	Quantitative
RCT	Randomized Control Trial
REOPA	Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets
ROSCA	Rotating Savings and Credit Association
SD	Standard Deviation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SWAPNO	Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities

TR	Test Relief
TT	Tetanus Toxoid
U-5	Under five-years-of-age
UH&FWC	Union Health & Family Welfare Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	Union Parishad
UPL	Upper Poverty Line
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAZ	Weight-for-Age Z-score
WHO	World Health Organization
WHZ	Weight-for-Height Z-score

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) is a poverty alleviation project under implementation in 37 Union Parishads (UP) of Lalmonirhat district, 17 Union Parishads of Gaibandha district and 45 Union Parishads of Jamalpur district in its third phase. The Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C) implements the SWAPNO project in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). SWAPNO follows international recommendations on what is required for a public works programme to achieve objectives of escape from extreme poverty.

SWAPNO project targets ultra-poor rural women who are widowed, divorced, abandoned or live with a disabled husband. SWAPNO focuses on creating productive employment opportunities for its beneficiaries (rather than being merely a safety net programme), aiming at more sustainable poverty-alleviation results.

Methodology

This baseline study includes intervention as well as control group households. The project-beneficiary households are the intervention households. The control households comprise households with eligible women of the same union but who could not fall into a benefit-receiving entity, selected randomly (they are in the SWAPNO waiting list). Union offices preserve the list of potential beneficiaries (i.e., control households) along with the list of beneficiaries (i.e., intervention households).

The baseline survey covered 884 sample households evenly distributed between intervention and control households. The survey covered all 45 unions in Jamalpur, 13 unions in Lalmonirhat (out of 37) and 6 unions in Gaibandha (out of 17). The sample for this survey was stratified and selected in two stages. Each district was treated as a separate stratum. Samples in each district were selected independently. In the first stage, Primary Sampling Units (PSU) were selected through Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) method. Unions covered by the project were PSU. In the second stage, an equal number of disadvantaged women were randomly selected from each selected union, using a list collected from the SWAPNO office (intervention group) and Union Parishad (control group).

Qualitative information was obtained through Focus Group Discussions with project beneficiaries and Key Informant Interviews with project officials, Union Parishad officials and front line workers of the project. The analyses of qualitative information and quantitative data were accomplished separately and then synthesized.

Key Findings

The findings revealed that most of the targeted disadvantaged women were widowed, separated, divorced or abandoned as expected in the project design. They were household head and primary income earners in most of the households. The average age of women was 36.2 and 36 years in intervention and control households, respectively. Almost all respondents had a poor educational background with about 35.4 per cent in the intervention group, compared to 33.8 per cent in control households, never attending any school. More than 80 per cent of women had below primary level education. Women were basically engaged in three types of occupations: work in other's house (maid), agricultural labour and non-agricultural labour.

The surveyed households had 3.2 members in the intervention compared to 3.3 in the control group. The estimated dependency ratio was close to 90 per cent in intervention and about 80 per cent in control households.

Educational poverty is highly pronounced among the target households. Nearly one-fourth of the household members (aged 6+) had no formal education; about 40 per cent of them were illiterate. Still, about 20 per cent of the 5-16 years old children were not attending school.

Close to two-thirds of the households in both intervention and control households had no homestead land, while agricultural landlessness was more widespread. Only 1.1 per cent of the intervention households own agricultural land compared to 1.6 per cent in the control group. The asset base of the households was appallingly poor.

For their livelihood, households were mostly dependent on agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour and work in others' home (maid); close to 80 per cent of the household income comes from these three sources. Most of the households were unable to spend enough to uphold a minimum level of living standard. Moreover, about 90 per cent of them had no savings and those who saved had an insignificant amount of money.

Most of the households were food insecure; their dietary diversity was not up to the mark. More than 80 per cent of women in both intervention and control households were malnourished. About 49 per cent of children in the intervention households were stunted compared to about 40 per cent in the control group. High malnutrition of women and children leads to high disease prevalence. About one-fourth of the children aged 12-59 months living in the households were not fully immunized.

Almost all the households collected their drinking water from a tube well. However, about half of them did not know whether the water source is free from arsenic, and 12.9 per cent in the intervention and 12.5 per cent in the control group used an arsenic-contaminated water source. Sanitation of the household was even worse—about one-third of surveyed households had no access to improved sanitation, while close to 50 per cent had no ownership of latrine.

Above 90 per cent of intervention and control households fall below both the upper and the lower poverty line. About two-thirds of them were multidimensionally poor. Most of the households were also vulnerable to disasters and crises or shocks. Their resilience to crises and lean seasons was fragile.

Reportedly, very few women were victims of violence and harassment. However, they reported psychological oppression as the most common violence faced by households in the last one year preceding the survey. Though the women had good knowledge of redress and complaint mechanisms, most of them did not complain about violence and harassment they faced.

Women in the surveyed households had comparatively higher mobility and involvement in household decision-making than women of extreme-poor households in general. However, this 'empowerment' comes from the hardship of life they face. They have been bound to do these things on their own for their subsistence.

Women had abysmal access to digital financial services. While two-thirds of them knew about property rights, only 33.9 per cent in the intervention group and 29.8 per cent in the control group had knowledge about fundamental civil rights. Overall, more than two-thirds of the women were dissatisfied with life in the baseline situation.

Summary of Key Indicators

Salient findings for further improvement and facilitating project progress tracking:

Indicators	Intervention	Control
• Average number of productive assets owned by household	0.89	1.38
• Average market value of household productive assets (BDT)	3,454	4,981
• Average monthly household income (BDT)	2,721	3,027
• Average monthly household expenditure (BDT)	2,901	3,174
• Average amount of household savings (BDT)	68	77
• Average amount of household outstanding credit (BDT)	2,105	2,368
• Per cent of children enrolled in school	Boys: 85.9 Girls: 80.2	Boys: 81.1 Girls: 78.2
• Per cent of food deficiency households	96.7	93.2
• Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS)	6.02	6.16
• Average number of days in a year that households report being food insecure	80.5	78.6
• Per cent of children aged 12-59 months old with complete immunizations	78.4	75.5
• Per cent of children 0-5 years old with stunted growth	48.5	39.8
• Per cent of children 0-5 years old with wasted	25.3	22.8
• Per cent of children 0-5 years old with underweight	16.9	11.3
• Per cent of women with Body Mass Index \geq 18.5	14.7	18.6
• Average number of days required to cope with the crisis and lean seasons	Flood: 73 Excessive rainfall: 74 Food deficiency: 66 Unemployment: 80 Sickness: 77	Flood: 66 Excessive rainfall: 48 Food deficiency: 64 Unemployment: 79 Sickness: 74
• Per cent of households with distress sales of assets to meet food needs	5.4	3.6
• Per cent of income poor households: By lower poverty line	93.5	91.4
• Per cent of income poor households: By upper poverty line	96.8	94.8
• Per cent of households with multidimensional poverty	62.1	63.3
• Multidimensional poverty index (MPI)	0.29	0.30
• Per cent of households deprived in years of schooling	48.5	46.0
• Per cent of households deprived in child school attendance	1.6	3.2

Indicators	Intervention	Control
• Per cent of households deprived in nutrition	23.0	25.9
• Per cent of households deprived in health care	3.2	1.6
• Per cent of households deprived of electricity	40.9	38.5
• Per cent of households deprived of adequate sanitation	69.8	71.2
• Per cent of households deprived of clean water	7.9	8.6
• Per cent of households deprived in floor materials	96.6	93.9
• Per cent of households deprived in cooking fuel	95.0	95.5
• Per cent of households deprived in a specific set of assets	99.3	93.7
• Self-reported health status of women in the last 6 months preceding the survey (per cent)	Good: 18.3 Average: 69.3 Poor: 11.3 Very poor: 1.1	Good: 20.2 Average: 69.34 Poor: 10.2 Very poor: 0.2
• Per cent of beneficiary women having a say in household decision-making to:		
✓ purchase and sale of physical assets (land, furniture)	48.9	39.9
✓ purchase and sale of ornaments	47.0	41.4
✓ purchase and sales of livestock and poultry	61.7	54.1
✓ purchase and sales of vegetables, fruits, and trees	61.3	55.2
✓ house construction and repair	57.9	47.1
✓ children's education	73.0	63.0
✓ marriage of children	66.0	54.2
✓ health care/intervention of children	73.2	61.8
• Per cent of women being victims of violence in the last 12 months	3.8	3.4
• Per cent of women being victims of sexual oppression in the last 12 months	0.7	0.2
• Per cent of women being victims of harassment in the last 12 months	0.7	0.9
• Per cent of women having a bank account	0.2	0.7
• Per cent of women having an account in mobile financial services (bKash, Rocket, etc.)	9.0	4.3
• Per cent of women knowing about digital financial services	Formal Banking: 1.8 Agent Banking: 18.4 Mobile Banking: 7.9 Insurance: 12.0	Formal Banking: 8.5 Agent Banking: 14.5 Mobile Banking: 3.9 Insurance: 9.9
• Women's overall satisfaction with life (per cent)	Highly satisfied: 0.5 Satisfied: 33.6 Moderate: 31.4 Dissatisfied: 17.2 Extremely dissatisfied: 17.4	Highly satisfied: 1.1 Satisfied: 29.3 Moderate: 34.2 Dissatisfied: 22.2 Extremely dissatisfied: 13.2