

# Midterm Study Report of SEEDS Programme Bangladesh

SADEQUL ISLAM

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**Midterm Study Report  
of  
SEEDS Programme (2019-203)  
February 2022**

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**Submitted to:**



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February, 2022

## Mid Term Study Report

### Socio Economic Empowerment with Dignity and Sustainability (SEEDS) Project

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ESDO in Kurigram, RDRS in Rangpur and GUK in Gaibandha  
District

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February 2022

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All the respondents and MTR team members of this evaluation did hard work that make the evaluation fruitful and accountable. The field activities like household survey, meetings, interviews, focus groups, households visit, TVET training and Participants visit as well as visiting commercial village, preprimary schools, Child club, Shonglap Centre/Forum were smoothly organized by the project staffs in all the project sites. Project staff systematically organized the evaluation events in most of the cases. The Stromme Foundation (SF) officials also helped to organize the evaluation process. The MTR team expresses their sincere thanks to each of the participants for their great contributions to this review process. The data Enumerators deserves special thanks who collected household data in 18 Upazilas within this very short time. Evaluator expresses thanks to the civil society members and government officials for their kind participations in the FGDs and SSIs in all the working Upazilas.

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We hope that this report captures some of the successes of the SEEDS over last couple of years despite some deviations due to Covid-19 pandemic situation and reflected the area of fine tuning to achieve the envisaged outcomes of the SEEDS Programme. It is also hoped that this report will assists the implementing organizations and the communities to overcome the identified areas of improvement for making contribution greater impact.

Kindest regards,

Sadequl Islam  
Consultant &  
Team Leader

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## Table of Content

<b>SEEDS PROGRAMME</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>ACRONYMS &amp; ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMERY</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1. BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>18</b>
1.1. INTRODUCTION .....	18
1.2. PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT .....	19
1.3. PROGRAMME UNDERSTANDING .....	19
1.4. MAJOR INTERVENTION: .....	20
1.5. TARGET GROUP AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: .....	22
1.6. PURPOSE AND MTR OBJECTIVES .....	23
<b>2. STUDY METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>24</b>
2.1. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY .....	24
2.2. STUDY ETHICS.....	25
2.3. COVID-19 PROTOCOLS.....	25
<b>3. FINDINGS AND REFLECTIONS</b> .....	<b>26</b>
3.1. RESPONDENT ETHNICITY, RELIGION, SEX, AND MARITAL STATUS .....	26
3.2. HOUSEHOLD POPULATION, HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND PERSON WITH DISABILITIES .....	27
3.3. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: .....	28
3.4. DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD POPULATION BY AGE.....	28
3.5. DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS MEMBERS BY EDUCATION.....	29
3.6. FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PLAN, SRGS AND WARD COMMITTEE`S PLAN AND FUNCTION .....	30
3.7. SELF-RELIANCE GROUPS .....	31
3.8. PEOPLES ORGANIZATION/WARD COMMITTEE .....	31
3.9. UNION COMMITTEES .....	32
3.10. FUND MANAGEMENT .....	32
3.11. ACCESS TO GOB SERVICES, SAFETY NETS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE .....	33
3.12. ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES: .....	33
3.13. HH MEMBERS ENGAGED IN SOCIAL STRUCTURES .....	34
3.14. SCHOOLING STATUS OF FORMAL GOVERNMENT SCHOOL CHILDREN: .....	36
3.15. SCHOOLING OF CHILDREN DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC SITUATION:.....	36
3.16. DROPOUT SITUATION: .....	37
3.17. NON-FORMAL PRIMARY EDUCATION: .....	38
3.18. BRIDGE SCHOOL:.....	40
3.19. CHILD CLUB: .....	41
3.20. SHONGLAP: ADOLESCENTS EMPOWERMENT .....	42
3.21. ADOLESCENT GIRLS ROLE IN THE FAMILY.....	43
3.22. ADOLESCENT GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY DECISION MAKING .....	43
3.23. ADOLESCENT INVOLVED WITH IGA .....	44
3.24. ADOLESCENT INVOLVED WITH DIFFERENT SAFETY NET .....	44
3.25. ADOLESCENT AWARENESS AND PRACTICE IN MAINTAINING PERSONAL HYGIENE .....	44
3.26. ADOLESCENT SAVING STATUS.....	45
3.27. MOBILITY OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS OUTSIDE THE HOME:.....	45

3.28.	ADOLESCENT LIFE SKILLS ENHANCED: .....	46
3.29.	SHONGLAP FORUM.....	46
3.30.	PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS (CSP) .....	47
3.31.	VEGETABLE PRODUCTION AND COMMERCIAL VILLAGE: .....	48
3.32.	OTHER PRODUCTIVE ASSETS:.....	51
3.33.	LOAN AND SAVINGS .....	56
3.34.	PROPERTY AND ASSETS .....	57
3.35.	OTHER GOODS, SERVICES AND COMMODITIES OF HOUSEHOLDS .....	58
3.36.	ELECTRICITY .....	59
3.37.	WATER AND SANITATION .....	60
3.38.	FOOD SECURITY, HEALTH AND NUTRITION .....	62
3.39.	WATER BORNE AND HYGIENE RELATED DISEASES .....	63
3.40.	CROSS CUTTING ISSUES .....	64
3.41.1.	INCLUSION OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITY .....	64
3.41.2.	DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION.....	64
3.41.3.	GENDER, DIGNITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, .....	65
3.41.4.	ANTI-CORRUPTION: .....	68
3.41.5.	IMPACT OF COVID-19.....	69
3.41.	MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY ANALYSIS .....	70
4.	ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS.....	72
4.1.	RELEVANCE .....	72
4.2.	EFFECTIVENESS .....	73
4.3.	EFFICIENCY.....	74
4.4.	PROJECT MANAGEMENT.....	75
4.5.	MONITORING .....	76
4.6.	IMPACT .....	77
4.7.	SUSTAINABILITY .....	78
5.	LESSONS LEARNED.....	79
6.	BEST PRACTICE:.....	80
7.	GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS .....	81
8.	CONCLUSION .....	88

## List of Tables

<a href="#"><u>Table-1: SEEDS Intervention Line and Expected Results</u></a> .....	19
<a href="#"><u>Table-2: Working areas and Households coverage</u></a> .....	22
<a href="#"><u>Table-3: Status of Tools and Data Collection during MTR</u></a> .....	24
<a href="#"><u>Table-4: Distribution of sample HHs by Upazilas</u></a> .....	25
<a href="#"><u>Table-5: Households members distribution by district (%)</u></a> .....	27
<a href="#"><u>Table-6: Educational status of the household members</u></a> .....	29
<a href="#"><u>Table-7: Cattle ownership (nos.) and percentage of households belongs</u></a> .....	49
<a href="#"><u>Table-8: Average no. of cattle and mean value per household</u></a> .....	50
<a href="#"><u>Table-9: Average no. of poultry and mean value per household</u></a> .....	50
<a href="#"><u>Table-10: Other assets used for income purpose</u></a> .....	51
<a href="#"><u>Table-11: Average number tree and average value per households</u></a> .....	51
<a href="#"><u>Table-12: Mean Income from different sources and HHs involved over last 01 year</u></a> .....	55
<a href="#"><u>Table-13: Mean expenditure on different purposes and HHs involved over last 01 year</u></a> .....	56
<a href="#"><u>Table-14: Ownership of homestead land</u></a> .....	57
<a href="#"><u>Table-16: Different Household items and mean value</u></a> .....	59
<a href="#"><u>Table-17: Death of children in sampled HHs over last 5 years</u></a> .....	62
<a href="#"><u>Table-18: Houses under different damage risks (% of HHs)</u></a> .....	64
<a href="#"><u>Table-19: Women involved in IGA</u></a> .....	65
<a href="#"><u>Table-20: Decision making ability (% of Women)</u></a> .....	66
<a href="#"><u>Table-21: Physical Violence against women by ethnicity</u></a> .....	67
<a href="#"><u>Table-22: Household members suffered by Corona</u></a> .....	69
<a href="#"><u>Table-23: Coping strategies during lock/shut down period</u></a> .....	69
<a href="#"><u>Table-24: MPI indicators and weightage</u></a> .....	70
<a href="#"><u>Table 25- : Burn rate of NGO budget</u></a> .....	74

## List of Chart

- Chart 1: Ethnicity of the beneficiary households
- Chart 2: Religious believe of the respondent
- Chart 3: Age and sex distribution
- Chart-4: Marital status of the respondent
- Chart-5: Household member's comparison (%)
- Chart 6: Type of person with disability
- Chart-7: Age distribution of households' members
- Chart-8: Safety net access among the household members
- Chart-9: Access to different services of GOB
- Chart-10: Membership with social structure (% of HHs Members)
- Chart-11: Women membership with social structure (%)
- Chart-12: Comparison of current schooling status of the formal school children (%)
- Chart-13: Learning continuation during COVID 19 pandemic situation by the children
- Chart-14: Situation of drop out in the project areas
- Chart -15: Causes of dropout
- Chart -16: Households with adolescent respondent
- Chart-17: Role of adolescents in family decision making
- Chart -18: Role of adolescent in family decision making process
- Chart-19: Participation in IGAs of the family by adolescent
- Chart 20: Receiving safety net support and other services by the adolescent
- Chart-21: Status of maintenance of personal hygiene
- Chart-22: Adolescent saving status
- Chart 23: Adolescent girls' movement outside home on her own
- Chart 24: Why adolescent do not move outside home on her own
- Chart 25: Adolescent perception of life skills

Chart 26: Households operating IGAs  
 Chart 27: HHs operating IGA and types of IGA they are involved  
 Chart-28: Vegetable production in Homestead (% of HHs)  
 Chart 29: Purpose of homestead production during MTR (%)  
 Chart 30: Distribution of poultry by BHHs  
 Chart 31: Major Type of TVET Training  
 Chart 32: Generate income to apply the T-VET training  
 Chart 33: HHs under different income category (%)  
 Chart 34: Annual income over last year  
 Chart 35: Poverty level of the HHs  
 Chart 36: HHs average yearly income and expenditure  
 Chart 37: Average annual off-farm income of the households  
 Chart 38: Average annual on-farm income of the HHs  
 Chart 39: Loan and saving Status of HHs  
 Chart 40: Saving place of money by HHs  
 Chart 41: Own homestead land category  
 Chart 42: Possession cultivable land and land category  
 Chart 43: Ownership of house  
 Chart 44: Construction materials of the houses  
 Chart 45: Electricity connection in the BHHs (%)  
 Chart 46: Type of fuel use for cooking  
 Chart 47: Arsenic Contamination of water source  
 Chart 48: major source of water  
 Chart 49: Ownership of water source  
 Chart 50: Types of latrine used (%) during MTR  
 Chart 51: ownership of latrine (% of HHs) during MTR  
 Chart 52: Number of months HHs take meals/day  
 Chart 53: Nutritional status of under 5 year's children and pregnant women  
 Chart 54: Prevalence of diseases  
 Chart 55: Family members go during pregnancy for regular check up  
 Chart 56: Coping mechanism of households (%)  
 Chart 57: Control over on asset and money by women  
 Chart 58: Women know about the women right and family law  
 Chart 59: Torture and Violence situation on women  
 Chart 60: Ownership of assets by women of the households (%)

**List of annex**

**Annex-1: Progress against Benchmark situation and LFA Indicators (revised)**

**Annex-2: Upazila specific analysis tables**

**Annex-3: District Specific Findings Tables**

**Annex-4: FGD and SSIs report**

**Annex-5: Data base of the survey in SPSS format**



## ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

BHHS	Beneficiary Households
Caritas	An international NGO (a partner NGO of SF)
CSP	Community Service Provider
ESDO	Eco Social Development Organization (a partner NGO of SF)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GUK	Gana Unnyan Kendra (a partner NGO of SF)
GO	Government Organization
HHS	Households
IGAs	Income Generating Activities
KII	Key Informant Interview
LG	Local Government
LGI	Local Government Institution
LSP	Livestock Service Provider
MFI	Micro Finance Institutes
MPI	Multiple Poverty Index
NGO	Non-government Organization
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RBM	Result Based Management
RDRS	A national NGO (a partner NGO of SF)
RRC	Rural resource Centre
SMC	School Management Committee
SUS	Sabalamby Unnyan Somity (a partner NGO of SF)
TOR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
US	Unnyan Sangha (a partner NGO of SF)
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
SF	Strømme Foundation

## Executive Summary

### Introduction:

Stromme Foundation has been implementing the SEEDS, a five years programme with the support of NORAD in collaboration with 06 partner NGOs. The project started its operation in 18 Upazilas under 06 districts of Mymensingh and Rangpur divisions of Bangladesh since January 2019. The target beneficiaries are mainly from poor and extreme poor households of both ethnic minority and mainstream Bengali community in diverse geo-physical settings (hilly areas, river island areas and plain land). The MTR was conducted after 3 years of implementation in January 2022 to know the changes so far in achieving the envisaged outcome as well as to identify the areas of fine tuning and improvement. Over the period, Covid-19 pandemic hit the implementation process due to government enforced lockdown and shutdown process. After that a new normal situation for al, which also demand few adjustments.

### Methodology:

The MTR was conducted in a full participatory process (360<sup>o</sup>) by involving project beneficiaries, relevant stakeholders, the project staffs, and NGO management. A stratified random sampling method was followed during sampling process for quantitative survey considering the heterogeneous geo-physical settings and context of beneficiaries. Among 16000 beneficiary households, a total of 1098 BHHs have been randomly selected. A face-to-face interview technique followed by physical verification has been conducted by using a set of questionnaires by recalling of their different socio-economic status over last 12 months ahead of the survey date. Discussions were also conducted with the Community service providers, Paikers, and with SRG and POs leaders. In addition, 6 workshops with conducted 6 partner NGOs staff and all findings were validated by the PNGO's staff and management during field visit and debriefing sessions. The method and all tools were administered upon prior approval of SF.

### Findings:

#### A. Building Strong Society

**Demography:** The survey findings show that around 74% are households are from mainstream Bengali Community and around 26% are from different ethnic and occupational minority of which about 12% are from plain land ethnic minority of Rangpur division; and another 12% from the foot of Garo hills under Mymensingh division. Another 2% are coming from different occupational and socially excluded group (Dalit. Horizon etc). The female headed household reveals 5.7% widows, and 1.8% are from divorced/deserted/separated, widower. Average household size is 4.04. 90% household have members within a range of 3 to 10 members. Among the household members, 2.2% are having different type of disabilities.

**Self-Reliance Groups, Ward Committees and Union Committees:** The selected households of the project has formed small groups comprising 6-13 households which is known as SRG. The SRGs do regular meetings cum awareness raising /information sharing sessions on fortnightly/ monthly basis. The awareness session sensitized community women on different social and human rights issues specially education, livelihood, health, rights and justice.

The MTR team found that SRGs, and Ward Committees have conducted problem and cause relation exercised and based on the findings, SRG and Ward Committees developed their SRG and Ward level plan. Besides, every members of the SRGs has developed their individual level Family Development Plan (FDP). The FDPs mainly covered the individual household level economic and better living conditions improvement aspects whereas the SRG level plan includes how they support the FDPs of the members and relate them the members with different support and services. On the other hand, Ward Committee has recently evolved and their plan encompasses the community aspects and how to support the to realize SRG's plan. During visit of households and SRGs, it is observed that most of activities planned for first 3 years have been achieved though there are concern of quality. They have

initiated collective vegetable gardening, develop the list of the eligible people for different safety net and services as well as made lobby with respective authorities. The SRG level plan creates volunteerism, enthusiasm, and collective spirit to address the members' issues. Almost 100% SRG members also received health and nutrition and disaster risk reduction (DRR) training organized by the project. It was further observed that the SRG level plans are periodically reviewed that accelerate the group dynamics.

In all Upazilas SEEDS has successfully brought all the small groups under Ward Committees with the representatives from each SRGs and these are newly organized (last one year to six months). So far WC, has successfully organized different events like hand wash day, Corona prevention awareness, hygiene practice materials distribution, vaccination camp etc. Community people etc. In addition, only 4 partner NGOs have initiated to form Union Level committees and other two partner PNGOs showed reservations to go for Union Committee such as SUS and Caritas. It seemed by the MTR team that Union Committee was formed in immature stage. During discussions with the PO / WC members, it has been observed that they could not distinguish the role of Ward committee and Union Committee.

**Fund management:** The MTR team found in both SRGs and WARD committees as a platform are dealing the financial management activities. They have accumulated about funds in SRGs, WARD committees, and a good number of Ward Committees have opened bank account also. The funds are coming from 02 sources: savings of the beneficiaries, and the profits from the group joint IGA project. They give loan to the members. But transaction in Bank accounts or maintained the accounts in cash book or passbook is not maintained.

**Access to GOB services, Safety nets and social structure:** From the inception of the project, SRG representatives are maintaining regular communication with local Union Parishads and Upazila level offices. The review team further observed that the tapping of services from relevant government agencies especially with department of livestock, health, education and local government are functioning well except Phulpur Upazila under Mymensingh district. The MTR findings show that So far 22% of members of the BHHs have received services mainly in education allowance, VGD and Widow Allowance. It is further understood from the MTR data analysis that a good number of HHs have received different services (mostly from CSP-Agriculture, SAAO and Livestock service providers) over the period. In agriculture, 53% has reported that they received advisory services and 73% mentioned that they received vaccination and advisory support either from LSP or Livestock office. 96% have visited community clinic for health purpose. In the baseline it was very few such as in agriculture, 3.9% HHs reported that they got services from Agriculture department while 2.4% and 1.4% HHs received services from livestock and fisheries department. In addition, 2.1% respondents reported that they have participated in Union Parishad budget preparation process during baseline period which reached up to 42% during MTR. In addition, another 19% BHHs have received different support from different GOs-NGOs during lock down period.

The survey and FGD data further revealed that among total households' members, 0.1% members are involved in school management committee and 1% members are engaged in market committee, 2% in local clubs and 9% in SRGs and others. However, among women, 1.7% in school committees and 97% in SRGs which is a very good indication increased social capital of the project beneficiaries. The survey data revealed that there was no participation from persons with disabilities in various social structures. However, no standing committees of Union Parishad exists since the new election process was going on during MTR survey process.

## **B. Ensuring inclusive quality education**

**Schooling status of formal government primary school children:** MTR found that present schooling status among the children has sharply declined to 27.9% which was 77.9% during the baseline survey (among boys declined to 28.4% from 79.3% and among girls dropped to 27.2% from 76.6%). Many causes were mentioned for this rapid falling during discussion such as according to government decision grade 1, 2, 3, 4 children come to school one day in a week. It has changed their habit. The students lose their interest because out of 6 school days they come to the school only one day. On the

other hand, secondary students of class 7, 8, 9, and 10 are mostly engaged with different job and some of the girls got married during the lock down period.

**Drop out and Schooling of children during COVID 19 pandemic situation:** MTR survey revealed that during COVID 19 pandemic situation 83% in Jamalpur, 81% in Sherpur, 76% in Gaibandha, 73% in Kurigram, 60% in Mymensingh and 59% in Rangpur did not continuing their study during the school closer. There were many causes for this situation such as government provided some online classes but many of the guardian in the rural areas have no android phone, lack of uninterrupted internet support, many of the guardian have not the capacity to bear the internet cost and children have lack of interest in the education as mentioned in the KII and FGDs. MTR also found that 14% children dropout from the education. Dropout among the secondary school is higher. It is found that highest number of dropouts happened in Gaibandha i.e. 19.20% and the lowest in Rangpur district which is 8.8%. Parents, SMC and primary school teachers opined that due to long time school closer many boys lost their interest in education as a result they have dropout from education system. Some girls in the secondary level got married as a result of their parents' decision.

**Pre-primary School:** MTR found that pre-school is one of the successful programs of the project. SEED project is operating pre-primary school for the 4-5 years of age children in the project areas. It helps them to prepare for the formal schooling. SF is providing two types of pre-primary education. The first one is one-year duration pre-primary education following the governments of NCTB curriculum and another one is MLE based two years long pre-schooling. They have learned Bangla and English alphabet and number up to 20. Most of them can read and write alphabet and number nicely. Can tell the name of bird, animals, name of seven days a week. The center is decorated with nicely after completion of preschool education children enrolled in the nearest formal school.

Caritas is implementing two years duration mother tongue based MLE curriculum in its working areas. They are running 30 MLE pre-primary schools. Out of 30 MLE schools 25 in Garo language and 5 Koch languages. MLE school follow own language in the first year and following year is NCTB curriculum emphasis on Bangla medium. After completion of preschool and MLE school all the graduated children are transferred to the nearest government primary school or any other formal in the locality. The mother and CMC members are very pleased to see the performance of their children. During lock down preschool were functional in small groups and classes were conducted in two groups three days in a week.

**Bridge School:** Bridge school is a temporary study center established in a government primary school catchment area to support children from the marginalized communities who have dropped out either from grade 3 or grade 4. The teacher teach the children following multi-grade approach in this Bridge school. After one year the graduate children are enrolled in formal school where they have been one-year follow-up support. In 2020 the project identified dropout children and enrolled them in the formal primary school. In 2021 the project did not run any bridge school as there is no such target children in the project areas.

**Child Club:** MTR found that the project is implementing child club in the formal government primary school to support the weaker children of grade 3 and 4. These children are under the risk of dropout. A child facilitator identify 20 – 25 weaker student from grade 3 and 4 with the help of school teacher. Facilitator teach Bangla, English and Mathematics. The MTR team found that the child club concept is innovative and effective for the target student of the formal school. The MTR team found that all though the children are enrolled in class 3 and 4 but they did not achieve the learning competency of grade 1 and 2. And it is a challenging task for the facilitator to provide support the children to improve their learning gap at individual level. The children are comparatively weak in English and mathematics.

**Adolescent Girls empowerment:** The MTR found that there are 20.4% population among the surveyed households are aged 11-19 years. The MTR study could capture the views of 206 adolescent HHs out of 1115 HHs through survey and 246 girls through FGDs. The MTR found that 91.2 % adolescent girls contributing in different household level activities which was 88.36 in the baseline survey. On the other hand 84.4% adolescent girls are taking care of family members, 51.7% adolescent are taking

roles in conflicts management in the family levels, whereas 30.7% are helping earning family income as well as 49.8% are helping younger siblings to their study it is a great contribution during COVID 19 situation to continue education of the younger children of the family. MTR also found that 70% girls are participating in the family decision making process in the baseline it was 56.58% and 30% girls are participating in IGA which was 33.13% in baseline. In addition, 58% of adolescent girls are getting safety net and other government services which was 21.1% in the base line survey. Moreover, all most 100% girls are capable of maintaining the personal hygiene issues against the baseline figure of 72%. Average 90.6% girls go outside of the on their own. Other girls mentioned that parents do not allow them to go outside and the community people does not like that girls go outside. The MTR data further revealed that 59.3% girls enhanced their life skills in the areas of work in a team environment, maintaining good quality, think positively, can do work like others and have satisfaction on their own. **Shonglap forum:** After one year completion of Shonglap members are graduated as Shonglap Forum. This forum is a greater network or platform where adolescents continue their activities as social change agents. From the FGD discussion it has been found that they are aware about the demerits of early marriage and they have protected many child marriages. However, they have reported that the incidence of child marriage increased due to COVID 19 pandemic and long-time educational institution closer.

### C. Creating livelihood and job opportunities

**Promotion of community service providers (CSP):** The MTR survey result shows that 100% SRG members received homestead gardening, poultry and livestock rearing training from SEEDS. The trainings were conducted by the CSPs. There are two types of CSP in the project i.e.(i) Agriculture Service Provider and (ii) Livestock Service Provider.

**Vegetable production and Commercial Village:** The MTR study found a significant improvement in homestead level vegetable cultivation. It was found during baseline survey that only 14% BHHS were cultivating vegetables in their homestead which has been increased to 78%.

**Livestock:** The midterm study revealed that there are 40.71% HHs have cow/ox (baseline 30% HHs, 339 nos.). Among the cow/ox owner, 24.68% HHs have 1 cow or ox, 11.38% have 2, 3.01% have 3 cows, 1.18 have 4 0.27% have 5 and 0.2% have more than 5 cows or ox. The midterm study also revealed that 78% HHs are rearing hen (baseline 53%), 54.2% are rearing ducks (baseline 17%). Among them 35.6% households have less than 5 hens (baseline 68.74%), 27.9% have less than 5 ducks (baseline was 74.6%). They are rearing it as business enterprise. These homestead base on farm enterprises contributed a lot in earning during Corona Lock Down period.

**Youth and TVET training:** A total of 1504 youth received such formal training and more than 90% were non-formal training since formal training was not possible to arrange due to closure of GO-Private TVET institutions. Altogether 42 different types of training were provided and around 62.5% trainees have started to earn income.

**Income:** The MTR study tried to capture the last one-year income and expenditure ahead of the survey date. Considering the income pattern, it is found that Non-agriculture income including labour selling is the major source of income 79694 Taka (baseline was 61357 Taka) whereas the income from agriculture farming during MTR study is 33746 Taka against baseline figure of 18701 Taka. In both cases, income has increased by 29% and 80% respectively. **The per capita per day income is found as 66.5 taka during MTR (base line 51.5 taka). It is also found that around 32.5% BHHs go beyond 80 taka per capita and per day income that was only 13% HHs during baseline survey.**

**Expenditure:** The MTR study categorized the livelihood expenses food item and non-food item. The study revealed that the food related expenditure is around 54811 Taka against the baseline value of 33680 taka including edible oil, spices and fuel wood for cooking. This might happen for increase price of the items as well as the better affordability of BHHs.

**Loan and savings:** The study revealed that 39.7% BHHs (baseline 38.7) have presently taken average loan of BDT. 32192 which was 26927 BDT during baseline period. It is slightly increased. The major

**source of loan is micro Finance Institutions (MFI) and similarly the major saving place is also the MFIs (75.5%). The average savings amount is 6587 Taka that is lower from baseline findings (7123 Taka).**

**Food security and Nutrition:** The midterm data revealed that almost 70% HHs (baseline 64.5 HHs) are now taking three meals every day for most of the time in a year and 27% are taking 2 meals per day as they are habituated to. The study also captured data about the nutritional status of the children and pregnant mother. The study observed that 2.1% children are still severely malnourished (baseline 28.4%). In addition, among pregnant mother, 1.2% are still malnourished against the baseline of 22%. In addition, 2.9% HHs reported that there was death of below 5 years during 2014-2019 children in their family over last 5 years which has been increased to 3.5%, a bit higher mortality rate for the period (2017-2021 ) period.

**Safe Drinking water:** The MTR study found that 95.4% of BHHs are using safe water drinking water from hand operated tube well (base line 86.5%) and 1% are using deep tube well water (base line 9.6%) supplied by pipeline, 1.2% are using water from dug well (base line 3.6%).

**Sanitation:** The MTR study reveals that the sanitation issue is still is a concern for SEEDS beneficiaries. Still 2.73% are using open places (base line 19.5%), 34% in hanging latrine, 11.7% in unlined pit and 7% in latrines without water seal. Therefore, only 24% BHHs are using water sealed sanitary latrines.

**Housing:** The MTR survey found that 91.4 % households are living in their own houses which is almost same with baseline 91%. However, the living status in parent house has been decreased and own housing ownership increased in the districts of Gaibandha, Kurigram, and Sherpur. The construction materials of houses also indicate about the living standard. In addition, 95.7% HHS are living in soil made floor against 94% of HHs in baseline study.

## Cross Cutting Issues and Covid-19 Impact

**Inclusion of Vulnerable Community:** *In regards to inclusion of extremely vulnerable people into the project activities, the survey data revealed that 2.3% person with disabilities the project sites. There is one Focal person in each POs, who has received training on handling disability issues. In addition, 7.5% women headed HHs were included and 2% are from socially excluded HHs which is a good initiatives of the project. However, the project need more deliberated effort for inclusion them in the income earning and social inclusion process.*

**DRR and Climate Change:** During MTR period, since election of Union Parishad was on going, there was no Union Disaster Management Committee and the team could not check the relation of focal person with UDMC. It is also found that almost 90% BHHs are now aware of flood warning (baseline 67.5 HHs) and 80% has plan to adopt different potential strategies to cope with disaster risks.

### **Women Empowerment, Gender and dignity:**

**Women involvement with earning:** The MTR team observed that 100% target people of the project were female though there are few male in advisory body of the union committees. All most all women participants informed the review team about their better family and social standing as compared to previous. They feel that they are now more honored and respected as an important and viable contributor to the family economy and as skilled and knowledgeable member of the community they live in. As a result, the importance of the female members increased and opened scope to participate in the decision-making process. The MTR study found a significant improvement of women involvement with income generating activities. The baseline study found that almost 28% women (2nd member) of targeted HHs are involved with petty income generating activities which is now enhanced to 76% during MTR survey . **Ownership and Control on assets and Income:** The ownership on valuable asset is an important achievement in the context of patriarchal societal context of Bangladesh. The MTR study found that 35% women now have ownership on land (baseline 8.7%) while 68% on cattle (baseline 12.5%), 54% on poultry (baseline 17.6%), 7% have sewing machine (baseline 1%) and 22% have gold jewelry (baseline 19.2%). **Knowledge level on Women rights:** The MTR study also collect

the knowledge level of the women in the aspect's women rights and family laws and it is found that 97% women are aware in this regard (baseline 25%). mainly on age of marriage, punishment against torture and rape etc. 25% women women respondents reported that they are well known about different aspects of family laws (baseline 10.8%). **Decision making ability of women:** The MTR study found that in 26% HHs, male is the key decision maker (18% baseline) where as 56% BHHs take joint discussion and 26% cases, women decides. In 42% BHHs women decides on matrimonial issues and 53% BHHs on educational aspects of children. Moreover 82% women can decide alone to go outside (baseline 48%). The MTR study further expose that 69% women and 53% can decide on participation in social events and movements. However, only 15% women said that they have control over the expenses of the households. **Violence against women:** The MTR study found that 7% women faced violence and another 11% remain silent (Average respondent 1098) which also a positive indication, in the base line it was 8.9% women. Among victim, mainly they are tortured by their husband (70%) and other members of the (20%). **Early or Child Marriage:** The teachers and SMC members mentioned that a good number (70-80%) girls reading class 9-12 become married due to corona lock/shutdown period. The child marriage is happened secretly due to various reasons. The data from FGDs with parents, adolescents and Schools reveals that 18% child marriage was occurred (Baseline 11%) over the year and closure of schools also mentioned one of the reason.

***Impact of Covid-19: During COVID -19 lock down period many of beneficiaries become jobless, especially those who worked in garments, factories, transportation sector or other source of incomes have reduced as a result, many of them are not able to have enough food. Some children have dropped out from school due closure of educational institute during COVID-19 period. Besides, COVID-19 have effect on various social issues like child marriage, domestic violence, theft etc. During COVID-19 period members have received food assistances from UP through the communication with UP member and chairman. Social functions or activities were not possible to arrange for them. However, the project has created awareness through Corona Volunteer team formation and it is found that 97.4% BHHs have received such training.***

The **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** The MTR has analyzed the poverty status following MPI score analysis and found that average 45% HHs are still poor (deprived) which is 37.88% for female headed HHs and 46% for male headed HHs.

**Relevance:** Relevance and appropriateness of the SEEDS has been found satisfactory in order to meet some of the basic needs and rights of the targeted beneficiaries and country priorities. It was evident that women got emphasis in livelihood development as well as to develop their "agency". At the same time, it was also observed that the project staff gave less priority for the children and women with disabilities which need to emphasized. The revised SEEDS project framework may directly contribute in achieving SDG goal 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 as well as partially contribute in SDG 9, 13 and 16. **Effectiveness:** The SEEDS project contributes in achieving the outcomes considering the social and economic empowerment aspects to some extent since the project is passing it's mid. Each HHs received training, seeds and saplings, TVET participants are getting income-oriented skill and started to earned income. The accessibility of basic quality education for children has increased compared to the before project status. The biggest success of the project is that it has ensured reasonably good quality pre-primary education for the 5 years old children near to their door stapes, education support to the poor marginalized deprive weaker children from grade 3 and 4 through child club. **Efficiency:** The project has been implemented in mixed manner i.e. quantitative achievement is achieved in most of the cases except some of the training, workshops and day observing, rallies due to Corona lockdown which significantly reduced the quality outputs. **Monitoring:** The Result based Monitoring observed strongly structured and continued. The project RBM is continued on monthly, quarterly, six monthly, and annual monitoring and indicator-based reporting and found effective. Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey can be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the sessions conducted by the CSPs. **Impact:** There are significant achievement on economic activities which ultimately help the people to lift out from poverty (almost 30% BHHs lifted out from poverty as per MPI analysis) and 52%

HHs have increased their income by 20% (225 BDT.) from the baseline income (172 BDT Per day Per Family). **Sustainability:** The SEEDS project will be ended after 2 years and sustainability of achievements and gradual taking over the responsibility from project staff to POs leaders. The sustainability of project achievement needs to be given serious thought as many factors outside the project context play vital roles. The Human and Institutional Development aspects sustain beyond the project phase if the SRG and WC leaders be equipped to manage their institutions efficiently.

**Lessons Learned:** Involvement of targeted families in the planning process i.e. FDP and SGPs has ignited their potentials and develop the ownership in their own development process. These exercises contributed to shift the mind-set of targeted HHs from relief to self-help process. MTR found that under SEEDS project a large number of households have gone through homestead-based income generation activities since Lock down period stuck the male members from earning. Best practice: Many new initiatives have been undertaken during lockdown period for better communication, coordination at management level such as zoom, Microsoft meet, Skype, WhatsApp group have contributed in programme implementation. All those will have long term impact in project management. Moreover, , continue education activities in small groups in pre-school, child club, found effective during COVID 19 lock down period. Conducting SRG and Ward Committee meeting in small groups also helped to maintain relationship with the BHHS. Awareness campaign for hygiene practices and vaccination by SRG leaders, CSP, TVET participants and publish poster, sticker, using loud speaker, billboard, festoon, found effective. Ensure hand wash point at SRG, WC, Schools, Shonglap centre, child club etc. Making list of vulnerable group members by COVID response committee and submit to UP and service providing agencies to get relief and other services found effective to keep the group members safe from financial risk. Ward committee and Shonglap forum also collected donation from local community and distributed among most vulnerable households

## Recommendation

### A. Building strong Society

#### FDP, SRG and WC aspects

- The POs should have strong working relation with the union level government services providers to derive benefit of services for their group members and community development. Accordingly, the POs should have regular working relation with SRGs that should channel up from individual beneficiary to WC/PO and vice versa. A democratic process of leadership change may be introduced which would be maximum for two term. Alternative leadership building strategy need to undertake in the follow up phase. Need capacity building of staff and POs leaders on different phases of organization development, its management and related values. The POs leaders require more training and support like communication with UP and relevant government sector. Since the Union Parishad Election was just completed, it is the right time to advocate for inclusion of POs representative in different standing committees of Union Parishad. **Fund Management** :The SRG and PO level savings fund management guideline need to be developed and practiced in a robust manner as they are not practicing any solid/unique savings and loan management system. System should be introduced to open up the membership (new poor) in SRGs from poorer committee. Since they already opened bank account of POs need to be operated in a professional manner.

### B. Ensuring Inclusive Quality Education

**Pre-school:** The sustainability issues of the pre-school need to discuss with guardians and CMC member so that they are mentally prepared for spending some money to continue the pre-school for the early development of the children. The project staff should discuss this issue with the guardian, community and CMC. In the rural area's road communication developed and many local transports are running in the road. So, it is very difficult for the small children



to go to government primary school which is far away from their home. It is necessary to a learning center near to the home of the children.

**Child club:** The child facilitator has capacity gap in proper assessment technique and to provide appropriate learning support to the weaker student based on their individual need and need to be improved.

**Formal School support:** The project should extend its support for the government school to bring back the normal learning environment and regularizing the students since Corona Lock down period is over. And provide orientation to teachers and SMCs on how to provide support to the weaker students to overcome their learning gap happened due to long time school closer during COVID 19 pandemic situation.

**Shonglap Forum:** Assembling of Shonglap forum girls is a problem. There is no specific place for assembling after ending of Shonglap centre. It is suggested to use community infrastructure (School room, Union Hall room).

### C. Creating Livelihood and job opportunity

MTR Survey results found that average 51% BHHs are rearing cattle and 69% are rearing poultry. Whereas only around 17% producing vegetables on commercial basis though 73% are cultivating vegetable for subsistence. The project should work more to change the mindset of the beneficiaries from “grow for consumption and sell” to “grow to Sell”. In such cases, involvement of male members of the household is essential in developing production plan and training on production technologies.

Capacity of the members including their spouse on improvise and commercial approach. Commercial approach meaning that cultivates or rears the Agro products in such way that produces bulk item together and have a linkage to the urban buyers.

Each HH need to identify at least one potential IGA (keeping rests as subsistence level) to scale up into enterprise adding up with value chain like as Poultry rearing and vegetable production. That may help them to increase their income and come out from the vicious cycle of poverty. Also, HH have to explore to increase more off-farm IGAs compared to on-farm ones to reduce the nature dependency considering their locations of multi-hazard prone areas.

**Community Service Provision:** Regular KAP survey can be conducted to monitor the effectiveness of the services provided by the CSPs. In order to make the private service provision more sustainable, there should be a gradual withdrawal of fees from project (can be started from Livestock Service Provider) in turn helps to increase the demand of the service providers if really beneficiaries are benefited by them? The Agriculture Service Provider need to acquire modern knowledge and technology with changing need of the people to sell the skill and knowledge.

**Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET):** Since the working area of SEEDS project is in lack of potential formal job providers and project does not like to encourage migration, therefore “self-employment creation” would be the best options for economic empowerment of the disadvantaged women, youth and persons with disabilities and recommendations are made accordingly. Mobile phone servicing is not a feasible options now a days since the phone sets and software are frequently changing and people are more interested to go to the service centers of that particular company. The chips are getting obsolete on frequent basis. Tailoring and Needle craft proved as non-viable options for income generation and should be avoided.

**Trainee Selection:** The potential trainee must be unemployed within age bracket of 18-35 and not a running student. Depending on socio-economic criteria and resource limitation of the project, the trainees can be divided in several sub-categories as follows:

- (i) The youth who are coming from comparatively better off households, who are able to provide own transportation, food and incidental cost. In that case, they will be provided with residential training at TTCs/MAWTs (electric, electronic, plumbing, tiles fitting, ISMO etc.) as it costs

around BDT 25000-30000 per course including training fees, accommodation and Food. The SEEDS project can contribute the training a portion of the expenditures which is within its budget.

- (ii) The youth who are from extremely poor households are to be supported by the SEEDS project by contributing all costs (transportation, food, training fees including materials) whether in TTCs or YTCs or in other institutes at local union level. To get ownership on the training, a refundable security amount of BDT 500 can be taken from the participants, so that s/he is not dropped out.
- (iii) Persons with disabilities are supported free of costs along with care givers. Whole relevant cost would be borne by the SEEDS project.
- (iv) Persons with disabilities with minimum education or illiterate can be supported with different small business (grocery shops, egg hatching, and clothes business).

**Trainer/ Training service Provider Selection:** Trainers selection need to be more professional manner who knows about the state laws, rules, security issues, etc. Specific checklist/characteristics and or guideline can be developed for selecting trainers for each trade need to be developed.

For women and persons with disabilities, proper physical, psychological and accessible environment must be ensured. The training providers will award training certificate printed on standard paper to all successful participants ceremonially (other than locally provided training on craft activities).

**Other considerable issues:** The Partners Organizations' management needs to be more involved in the implementation process and worked following shared responsibility. The partner project team (just at the start of any new intervention may develop the activity-wise implementation guideline along with key monitoring and follow-up check-points and shared that to Stromme Foundation for review and endorsement. This will increase the ownership of Partners NGOs in the project processes.

**Need Synergy with other actors :** CARITAS successfully link the beneficiaries with other project of Caritas such as Trade School project of MAWTS, Automobile Engine maintenance and Industrial sewing machine operation (ISMO) training with certification. Certification can add value whether in self-employment or job placement. Caritas trade school project funded by Miserior contributes other money. It is good example of synergy and leverage. Such approach can be followed for across the project.

**Critical Mass:** For policy advocacy wider and united voice raise is a critical juncture to change the lagged situation. With existing programme only in 2-3 unions per Upazila is less significant in this regard. There is a need of horizontal (expansion to adjacent unions) and vertical (inclusion of new extreme poor members) expansion of programme for a greater voice for effective advocacy at Upazilla & district level.

**Capacity Building:** Process facilitation training is required for staff and group leaders – for self-propelling organization development, institutionalization of tools & practices, commercial village development strategy linkage establishment, networking, advocacy, tapping of resources & services. for the staff and POs leaders and refreshers. Similarly capacity building of staff and Group leaders need to be imparted– focus would be on ODM/HID, advocacy, fund management, business plan development, and entrepreneurship development and on value chain analysis. Organize exposure visits for PO leaders and Staff on successful apex of poor beneficiaries can enhance the confidence.

### **Conclusion**

There is scope to create better situations for the extreme poor participants to make positive changes in their livelihoods. The management and project implementation team hopefully will prioritize the recommendations and develop plan to materialize feasible recommendations within the project framework. Staff should not run after just for result in any way, they need to work for qualitative change the work style, implementation methodologies thus automatically generates good or expected results. The project management might consider these as priority areas as well as put more attention.

## Chapter-One

### 1. Background

#### 1.1. Introduction

Stromme Foundation (SF) is a Norwegian international development organization that provides technical and financial supports to humanitarian development projects in 11 countries in East Africa, West Africa and Asia. SF is working in Bangladesh since 1990 and is officially registered as an International Non-Government Organization. Since then; it has been operating its country programme through different local partner organizations towards the vision of a world free from poverty. With a deep respect for human dignity and a conviction of the value of equitable partnership, SF works to empower the poor to take charge of their own lives and communities. SF efforts are founded on three Core Values – Dignity, Justice and Solidarity.

SF Bangladesh used to run short term projects till 2007. Afterwards, the organization shifted its focus from short term project implementation to long term development and introduced a successful Master Plan from 2008 to 2013. SF then launched its first strategic plan (2014-2018) in 2014. Currently, SF is executing a new strategic plan from 2019-2023 following its successful execution of the SP 2014-2018. The 2019-23 strategic plan aimed to lift 16,000 marginalized families out of poverty in a lasting way.

In that perspective, to create a greater impact in the communities, SF is following the below implementation strategies (a) Holistic and integrated approach; (b) Strong Focused on Right Based Approach (RBA) and (c) Ensuring Results-Based Management (RBM).

In line with the above implementation strategies, SF considered the “Family as a Unit” approach in the program to address the issues which are interlinked in the families and communities. The program ensures community engagement and participation to address the root causes of poverty. SF Bangladesh is assisting to address the individual, family and community level issues through the development and strengthening of civil society and public sectors. Moreover, SF is also focusing to improve livelihoods, decent income through different IGAs, and quality education for lifelong learning in the targeted communities. SF has also emphasized the importance of strengthening small groups e.g., Self-Resilience Groups (SRGs) to secure their fundamental rights to live as a dignified person in the society.

Regrettably, on halfway through the current SP (2019 – 2023) the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic slowed down the overall delivery of the SF program. Countrywide lockdown seriously affected the families’ livelihood, income, education, and many other social matters. Several studies revealed that a huge drop of income, and many people became jobless as effect of Covid-19 which created mental pressure on the families. The studies indicated that violence against women, child marriages, child labor remarkably increased, and 45% of children (especially girls) may not back to school. There is also some immediate and long-term effect on the context of SF program operations. Nevertheless, the country is back to a “new normal” situation. It is critically important to understand the new normal situation. The midterm review (MTR) has been planned to carry out measuring progress as per the objectives and its key performance indicators (KPIs). The MTR also aims to find out the short term and long-term impact of COVID 19 on SF program beneficiaries in view of change factors. Both qualitative and qualitative methodologies were applied in this study. **In this connection, SF globally has formatted a “n e w normal mapping matrix” and the report/situation is also aligned with the matrix.**

## 1.2. Presentation of the Report

The study report is presented in 06 major chapters. Chapter 01 discusses the background, purpose of the baseline study, a brief on SEEDS project, study population etc. Chapter 02 discusses the study methodology including study population, study ethics and limitation. Chapter 03 discusses Findings of the MTR survey against the baseline situation including qualitative aspects. Chapter-4 discusses the crosscutting issues and Covid-19 impact. Chapter 05 analyses the findings under OECD criteria following the evaluation questions, Chapter 06 discusses the recommendations and conclusions. Moreover, NGO specific reports, Upazila specific findings and sub-indicators under MPI, progress against the benchmark status of log frame indicators, and translated versions of FGDs, KIIs, and action plan etc. are placed in Annexes. The data base is also attached as separate document in SPSS format.

## 1.3. Programme Understanding

SF strategic plan 2019-2023 has been named “Socio-Economic Empowerment with Dignity and Sustainability (SEEDS)” programme in Bangladesh. The programme is built upon its strengths, addressed past shortcomings, and considered lessons learned in developing the present SP. The plan has been guided by four principles: (a) Rights-Based Approach (RBA), (b) Results-Based Management (RBM), (c) cost efficiency and effectiveness, and (d) innovation.

### Thematic Focus

The following are the Thematic Goals, Intervention areas and planned outcomes of SEEDS Programme:

<b>Table-1: SEEDS Intervention Line and Expected Results</b>		
<b>Thematic Goal</b>	<b>Intervention Line</b>	<b>Expected results*</b>
<b>1. Building Strong Society</b>	Empower individuals and communities to claim their rights	Strengthened ability of rights holders, including people with disabilities, to hold duty bearers to account
		Independent and democratic rights-based community structures in SF supported communities
	Promote partnerships and accountability of duty bearers	Increased transparency, accountability and use of participatory planning processes by the Government
		Community-based organizations and NGOs are engaged in peace building and conflict transformation
		Improved governance and institutional capacity of partner NGOs (strong civil society actors)
<b>2. Ensuring inclusive quality education</b>	Ensure inclusive quality education and lifelong learning (formal and non-formal)	Improved enrolment of children into formal education, including children with disabilities
		Improved retention and completion rates of children in formal schools, including children with disabilities
		Improved safe and inclusive learning environments, including for pre-school children at risk
		Improved school preparedness among children of pre-school age
		Improved quality of teaching methodologies and motivated and well-trained teachers
		Improved availability of quality mother tongue instruction
		Improved functional literacy rate and capacity of women and adolescents to take a proactive role in their lives and families

Table-1: SEEDS Intervention Line and Expected Results		
Thematic Goal	Intervention Line	Expected results*
		Improved learning outcomes for participants in SF-supported Program
		Increased government responsibility for quality of, and access to, inclusive education
	Empowerment and life skills training for adolescents	Reduced early marriage, use of bride price/dowry and/or gender-based violence and discrimination in SF-
		Increased self-esteem, awareness of rights and capacity to claim them among adolescent girls and boys
		Increased government responsibility for the rights of disadvantaged groups
<b>3. Creating livelihood &amp; job opportunities</b>	TVET with strong labor market linkages, especially for youth	Increased youth employment in SF supported areas
	Value chain and enterprise development	Increased job opportunities for the poor along the value chain
		Increased incomes and profitability through access to markets and improved business skills
		Increased negotiation power of producer groups
		Increased access to appropriate financial services for the rural poor
Ultra-poor graduation, through strategic Partnership	The ultra-poor cross the extreme poverty line	

\*Note that the 'Expect Results' phrased differently in the SF results-log.

### The goal and objectives of the SEEDS Programme for 2019-23

**Goal:** By end of 2023, 16000 marginalized families enjoy the improved socio-economic life.

**Objectives:**

1. By end of 2023, 70% of People's Organizations are institutionalized to address basic rights issues of the marginalized communities
2. 80% targeted families have improved sustainable livelihood
3. By end of 2023, 36900 vulnerable and marginalized eligible children have access to quality primary education
4. By end of 2023, 10500 adolescents from marginalized communities are socially and economically empowered to protect their rights
5. By end of 2023, 4500 youths from marginalized families equipped with relevant Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) skills.

#### 1.4. Major Intervention:

**1.4.1. Peoples Organizations:** SF's Bangladesh program emphasis on grassroots level mobilization and advocacy through People's Organizations. By educating and organizing the marginalized people mainly women, SF strives to build the Self Reliance Groups (SRG), Community Based Organizations name as Peoples Organizations (POs)/Ward Committee(consists of several SRGs) through improving their capacity on leadership and advocacy. SF provides various support to strengthen POs so that they can bargain and negotiate with the local government agencies and

other duty bearers to bring their desirable social and economic changes in their households and communities through advocacy.

**1.4.2. Non-Formal Primary Education:** This program is supplementing the government's education program in hard-to-reach areas where marginalized children live in, have limited access to formal primary education. SF is implementing several types of non-formal models in the community to create access to education.

- **Pre-primary School:** Preprimary school is a one-year course for 4-5 years of age children. The curriculum is following as per government the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). After one year, all the graduated children are transferred to the govt. primary school. Besides, SF is implementing a mother tongue based Multiple Language Education (MLE) Center, where ethnic children learning through their own language and then bridging in the formal education system.
- **Bridge School:** A Bridge school is a temporary study center established in a government primary school catchment area to support children from the marginalized communities who have dropped out either from grade 3 or grade 4. The teacher is applying the multi-grade model approach in this Bridge school. After one year the graduate children are enrolled in formal school where they have been one-year follow-up support. The target age group of the Bridge school children is 9-12 years.

**1.4.3. Child Club:** Program introduced a child club for slow learners in their out-of-school time e.g., before and after school hours. The clubs provide remedial support to the slow learners of grade 3 and grade 4 who are at risk of dropout. This child club is creating an opportunity for slow learners to obtain learning opportunities outside their school hours. The fact that a huge number of children (overcrowded) in a class deters a teacher from giving proper attention to all students equally. As a result, many children fall behind in learning and these students are most at dropout risk before completing primary education. Regrettably, most of the children who are behind in education in primary schools are from poor families, and most of the students from the countryside are first-generation learners. There is none in their families to assist them properly in their learning process. Child club operated three days a week and the Average duration of each session is 1.5 hours. Overall, child club is a safe place where students are learning in an informal and enjoyable environment e.g., learning through singing and listening to songs, playing math's and games, doing activities, using different aids, etc.

**1.4.4. Quality Education in Primary Schools:** This program works with the poor performing formal primary schools and the aim is to build a sustainable quality improvement of the school. The program targeted School Management Committee (SMC), formal schoolteachers, parents, and local duty bearers. The program involved communities, parents, teachers, and SMCs to prepare an annual school improvement plan (SIP) and ensure a participatory process for resource mobilization, activate Parent- Teacher Association, and creating a joyful learning environment at school. A lot of capacity-building initiatives are organized for teachers, SMCs, and parents.

**1.4.5. Shonglap:** Shonglap is one of the flagship programs of the SF in Bangladesh. It is a one-year education program for adolescents on critical consciousness, literacy skills, life skills, and job skills. The program aims to empower girls to overcome their challenges and take control of their lives. It also works to address gender inequality, stop child marriage in the households and communities where SF intervenes. After one year, the Shonglap graduates from Shonglap Forum. This forum basically a greater network or platform where adolescents continue their activities as a social change agents.

**1.4.6. Sustainable livelihoods and job opportunities:** SF Bangladesh targeted the most vulnerable families of marginalized communities to bring them out of poverty and let them live dignified life. SF focuses on the empowerment model for creating sustainable livelihood in the targeted communities and developing the local market system for sustainable development through linkage

of local and distant buyers among the communities. The organization also engaged communities with the public and private sector actors to improve sustainable access to quality inputs and better markets for outputs.

**1.4.7. Technical and Vocational Training (TVET):** TVET is the key intervention for creating job opportunities for youths in the targeted communities. This program is also promoting economic inclusion among the youths. TVET plays a critical role in creating employment opportunities and supporting to increase their family income. Prior to start TVET intervention, the program carry-out a market study to identify the market need and areas of demand for technical and vocational educational skills. The program has explored the potential partnership with formal and non-formal (Ostad/Guru and apprentice model) service providers where trained skilled human resources are required. The program emphasized ensuring decent and green jobs creations.

**1.5. Target Group and geographical location:**

SF targeted the unprivileged rural poor and marginalized ethnic communities considering the local context. SF actively considers women who mostly bear the hardship of poverty, injustice, and exclusion due to prevailing gender-based discriminations, practices, structures, and stereotypes. SF, therefore, has put a focus on women’s rights at SF work in every Program process and cycle, e.g., gender analysis in Program planning, addressing women’s rights in strategic interventions and measuring change with gender indicators. Our target group also falls into children and youth, especially adolescent girls to nurture their potential to grow and develop with skills and knowledge to lead and work as agents of change. SF focuses on those who are deprived of the necessities of life, powerless, victims of human injustice, and victimized by internal/external factors because of their socio-economic and cultural identity.

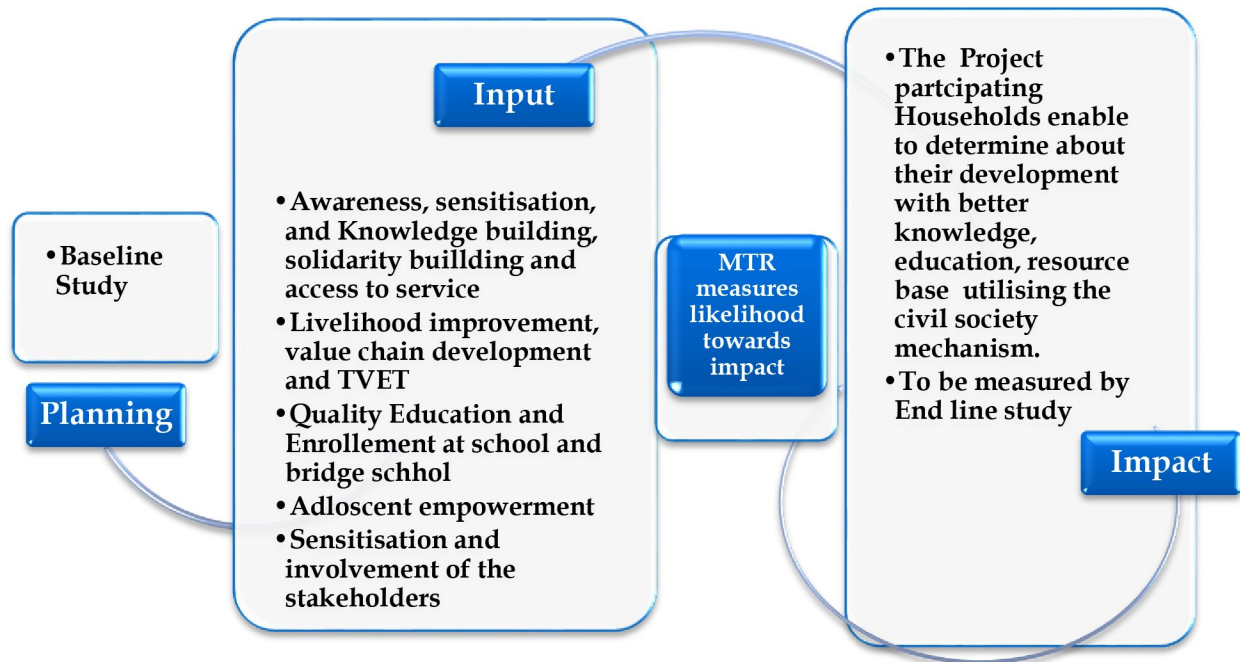
SF engages with diverse categories of excluded and poorest people and groups including landless, near land-less, persons with disabilities, climate change affected people, indigenous, children and youth, state and non-state actors and institutions, media, and other stakeholders. SF works in partnership with communities and local/national organizations. Such relationships tend to be long-term and intensive.

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>District</i>	Households	Sampled Households (#)
RDRS	Rangpur	3000	186
Caritas	Sherpur	2500	180
ESDO	Kurigram	3000	183
GUK	Gaibandha	2500	186
SUS	Mymensingh	2500	181
US	Jamalpur	2500	182
<b>Average</b>	<b>6 districts</b>	<b>16000</b>	<b>1098 BHHS</b>



## 1.6. Purpose and MTR Objectives

The overall purpose of MTR is mainly for learning and improvement of the project processes. It is anticipated that the outcomes of this mid-term review will provide relevant information to the ongoing status of work of the partners; explore why the interventions implemented by the programme succeeded or not; and provide guidance for subsequent implementation of the programme over next two years. The review also assessed whether, or not the project plans were fulfilled, and resources were used in a responsible way. In addition, the study also explored the best practices and lessons gained during the Covid-19 lockdown period.



Thus, the specific objectives of the MTR are as follows:

In particular, MTR assess the progress of the overall SEEDS programme in following areas related with the expected results as specified in the log frame.

- To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of strategies, approaches, and implementation of the intervention process
- To document, how were community was able to address the social issues and problems by the community themselves.
- To determine the relevance of the program in relation to the existing needs of the stakeholders and changes in the environment
- To assess factors contributing to long term sustainability of program interventions
- To recommend the program improvement/ modifications by aligning the findings of the new normal situation from COVID-19 Pandemic
- To identify lessons learned on the strategic approaches and best practices and providing possible recommendations to complete the current program effectively.
- To assess the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the partnership with implementing partner NGOs.

The MTR team followed the standard of OECD criteria during the MTR process i.e. relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability as well as tried to capture the answers against the evaluation as mentioned in the ToR (**please see-ToR in Annex**).



## Chapter-Two

### 2. Study Methodology

#### 2.1. Evaluation Methodology

The methodology of the MTR was designed based on the scope of work, objectives, and deliverables. The study was carried out in 18 working Upazilas of 6 districts where 6 partner NGOs are implementing the SEEDS programme. The methodologies followed a mix matrix both qualitative and quantitative approaches with a variety of primary and secondary data sources guided by participatory principles. The MTR process has ensured full participatory process (360<sup>0</sup>) by involving project beneficiaries, relevant stakeholders, the project staffs, and NGO management in assessing and validating both success and improvement areas by them during field visit and through a debriefing session after field visit. In addition, all staff of respective partner NGOs have given their opinion on their success, failure, factors behind success and failures as well put forward recommendations for improving the situation by participating in a workshop (**participants list enclosed in Annex**).

Considering the heterogeneous geo-physical settings and context of beneficiaries, the study selected responded on random basis from each Upazila so that a representative sample size is derived following a stratified random sampling method for quantitative survey. Stratification is made according to the working districts. In case of multiple Upazila of a working district, proportionately distributed to

Tools/Methods	Source of Information	Achieved	Remarks
End-line random survey	Project Beneficiaries HHS	1098 HHS	
SSI	Relevant stakeholders	14	DLS-2, Health-2, NFPE teacher-2, PO member-3, PTA member 2, Teacher –Pre School-1, UP Chairmen-2
FGDs	Relevant stakeholders	12	
Interaction with MTR consultants	with SRGs, POs/ward Committee/Union Committee	22	12 SRGs, 6 Pos, 4 Union Committee
Interaction with with MTR consultants	CSP, LSP, RRC management	26	CSP-LSP-12, Commercial village-12, RRC Mgt-2
Interaction with Schools and Shonglap	Teachers, Animators, children, students, Adolescents, SMC Members	24 schools and shonglap center	6 preprimary, 5 girls shonglap. 1 boys shonglap, 6 Child club, 6 SMCs, bridge, MLE schools-2
Interaction with TVET participants	Trainee, ostads	41 trainee, 4 ostads	
Household observations	Project Beneficiaries Activities	50	Following an observation checklist.
Workshop with staff	Project Staff	6	Meeting with SF , CODEC and POPI staff
Debriefing sessions	Staff and management representatives	6	to know the interventions period and major changes and in beneficiary level
Case Studies	Project Beneficiaries	6	

finalize the appropriate number of respondents per Upazila. Among 16000 beneficiary households, a

Average of 1098 BHHs have been selected. The survey took off through orientation of data enumerators followed by data collection. A face-to-face interview technique followed by physical verification has been conducted by using a set of questionnaires by recalling of their different socio-economic status over last 12 months ahead of the survey date. In the same questionnaire, separate interview was conducted with the women (1098) and with 224 adolescents' girls (as available during survey time). The method and all tools were administered upon prior approval of SF personnel. The tools and data collection status are presented in the Table-3 below.

The data/information were also collected through semi-Structured interviews with stakeholders, focus groups discussion and workshop/meeting and project staff to cover all dimensions of the project's components, log frame and M&E Plan. Remaining HHS were covered physical observation at different level. Quantitative data were collected using online data collection platform of ODK and analyzed in SPSS software by the consultant team.

**Details methodologies of the study are discussed in Annex-1.**

## 2.2. Study Ethics

Following standard research ethics were maintained during the study:

### **Voluntary and informed consent:**

The enumerators have explained the objectives of the survey and obtain the respondents consent. This procedure is called "informed consent". Interviewees are entitled to decline or stop the interview at any given moment of the survey without any negative consequences for them.

**Protection of interviewees and child protection and confidentiality:** The safety of each interviewee will be given priority. In this case standard child protection policy and sexual harassment policy of SF were followed. All data will remain as confidential and shall not be used without prior consent. Only aggregated findings are used in this report except case stories and KIIs. Each participant was informed that the information he / she supplied will be kept and used in aggregated manner.

## 2.3. Covid-19 Protocols

The study has maintained all relevant protocols advised by Bangladesh Government during the field visit and data collection process. The prevalence rate of Covid-19 was below 5% and almost 45 districts were free of Covid patients. However, our staff and enumerators generally wear masks and followed other sanitization aspects and distant sitting. All FGDs and other meeting were conducted in small groups and in remote locations. All enumerators have completed their full dose vaccine and thanks to god that during MTR, none of the MTR team members or partner NGOs staff or project beneficiaries were affected by Covid-19. **Limitations:**

- It was difficult to cover overall success or failure issues of the whole scenario just by spending only 1.5 days in each of the partner NGO.

District	Upazila	Surveyed HH(Nos)	
		Baseline (N=22000)	MTR (N=16000)
Gaibandha	Gobindaganj	63	68
	Fulchori	67	50
	Gaibandha Sadar	65	68
Kurigram	Nageshwari	60	59
	Ulipur	52	54
	Kurigram Sadar	72	70
Sherpur	Sreebordi	40	42
	Jinaigati	85	74
	Nalitabari	60	64
Mymensingh	Haluaghat	53	66
	Dhobaura	70	63
	Fulpur	62	52
Jamalpur	Dewannganj	53	70
	Islampur	58	54
	Bokshiganj	70	48
Rangpur	Pirganj	63	69
	Mithapukur	70	54
	Badarganj	52	63
<b>Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>1115</b>	<b>1098</b>

## Chapter-Three

### 3. Findings and Reflections

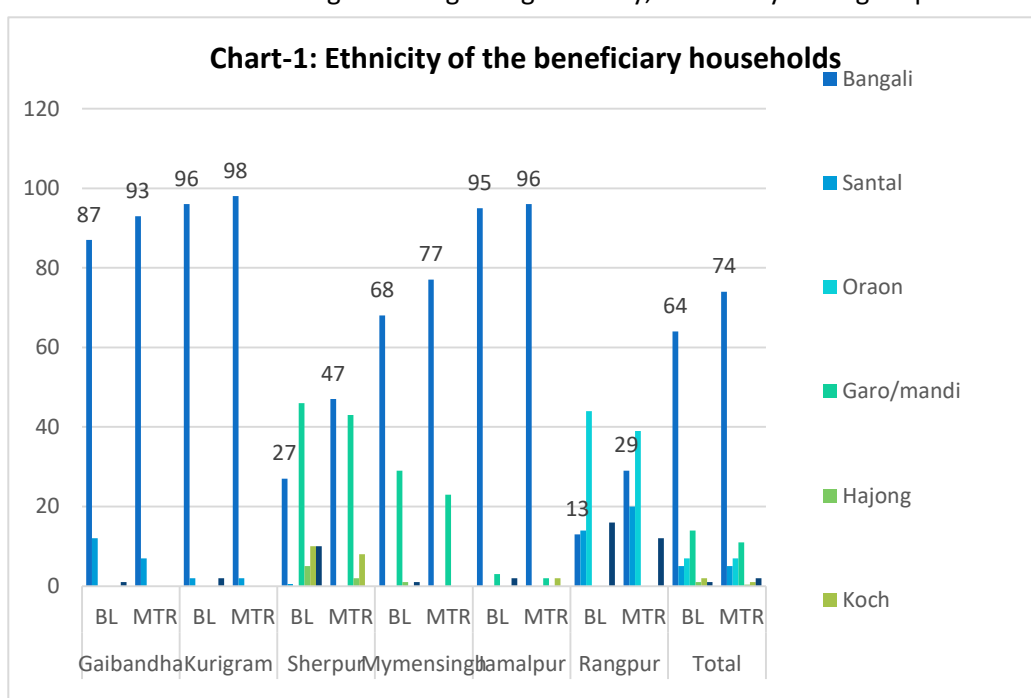
The findings of the data analysis covering all dimensions of the project’s components, log frame and M&E plan are presented under this section of the report. Mainly district level analyses are presented in the main report whereas Upazila level presentations are placed in the **annex-3**.

### General Comparison between Baseline Survey and MTR survey findings

#### 3.1. Respondent Ethnicity, Religion, Sex, and Marital status

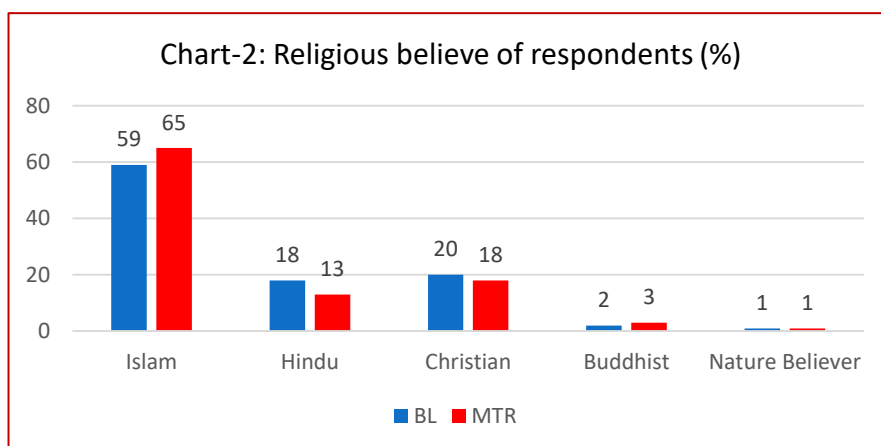
It is earlier mentioned that 1098 beneficiary’s households were randomly selected from 32 unions under 18 Upazilas and interviewed during MTR. Regarding ethnicity, the survey findings exposed that Bengali

population is 74% during MTR which was 64% during baseline (Chart-1). However, plain land ethnic minorities number remain same i.e. 12% in both baseline and MTR period. The tribe of

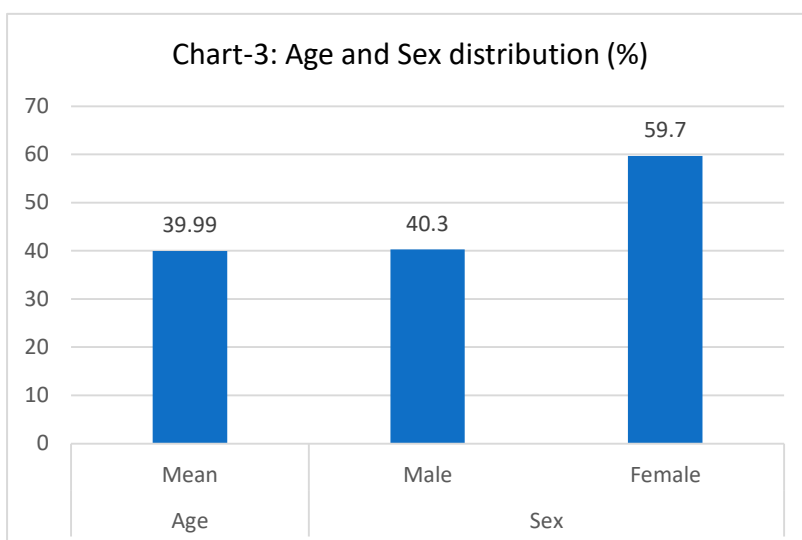


Garo hill area are decreased such as there were 14% Garo, 1% Hajong and 2% Koch community during baseline which now

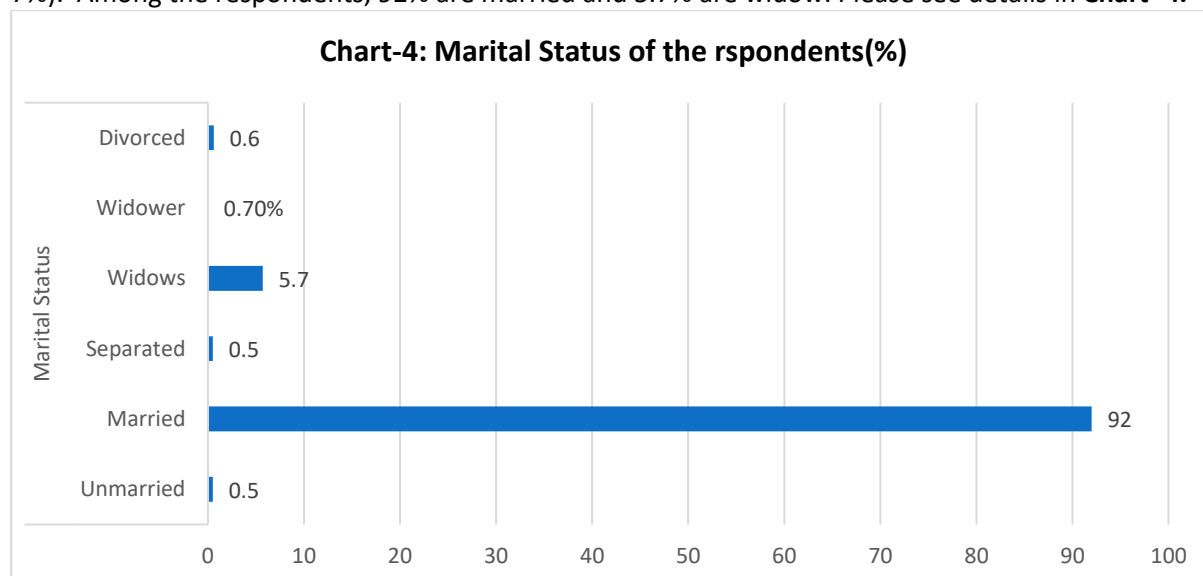
decreased to 11%, .4% and 1% respectively. Inclusion of other socially excluded households such as Rabidas, Horizons households increased from 1% to 2% is a very good initiatives. The distribution of targeted households by ethnicity and by districts are



shown in the **chart 1**. There are also changes in religious distribution and Muslim community increased by 6% after rearrangement of target households than other minorities (**chart-2**). Nature believers are found mainly among plain land ethnic minorities in Gaibandha and Rangpur district and Buddhist are also found in Rangpur district (**Chart -2**).



From the study, average age of the respondents/household's head is 40 years. The male and female ratio is 40% and 60% respectively (**Chart-3**). Female headed households' percentage has been decreased from 18.4% to 6.8% from base line to MTR period. Female headed households found higher in Kurigram, Rangpur and Mymensingh districts (more than 7%). Among the respondents, 92% are married and 5.7% are widow. Please see details in **Chart -4**.

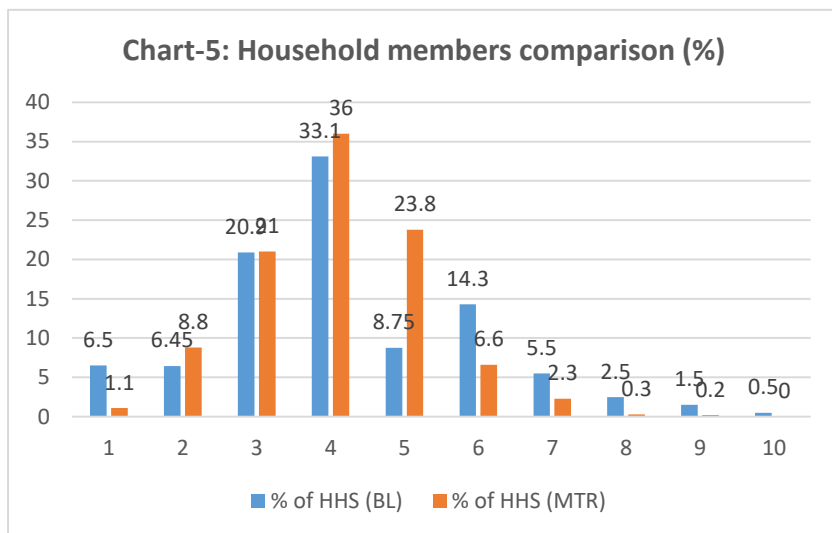


### 3.2. Household population, Household size and Person with disabilities

The total population of sampled BHHs is found 4433 which was higher than baseline period i.e. 4369. Average family size of the studied households during MTR found as 4.04 that is higher than the baseline findings of 3.92. However, both the number is still lower than the national average (4.11 in Rural). The study indicates that there are around 2.3% members of the beneficiary households are with persons with disabilities (**Table-5**). The study further revealed that there are 1.1% households with only 1 member (mainly widow, separated and deserted

District	Average HHs size		Persons with Disabilities (%)	
	BL	(MTR)		
Gaibandha	3.75	4.09	2.9	2.5
Kurigram	3.42	4.16	3.5	2.1
Sherpur	4.02	3.99	2.2	1.8
Mymensingh	4.45	4.25	2.0	1.8
Jamalpur	4.03	4.14	1.8	3.2
Rangpur	3.87	3.06	3.1	2.5
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>

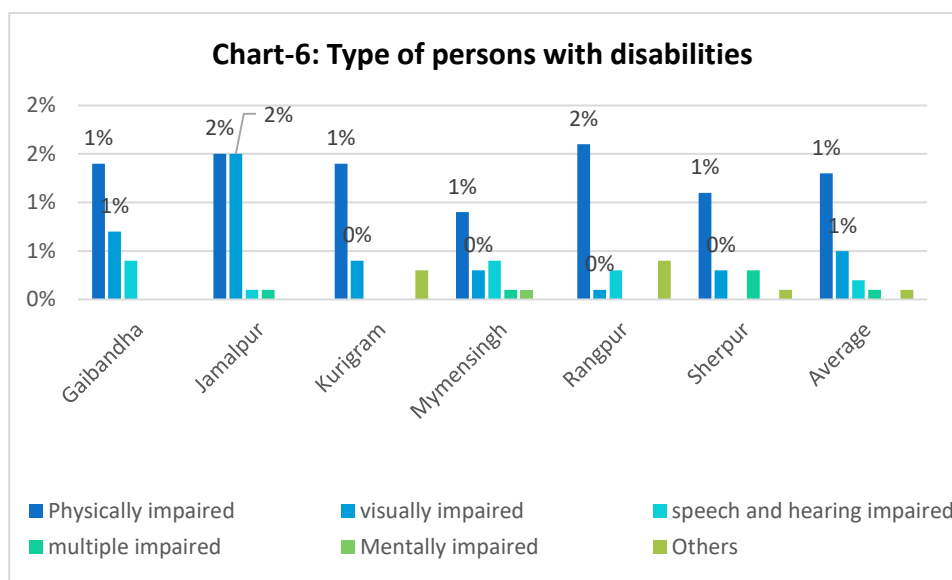
women headed households) during MTR against 6.5% households of baseline figure. 27.4% households were found with 2-3-members family which increased to 29.7%. The MTR has found 66.4% households with 4-6 member which was 56.15 during baseline period. 2.8% households have 7-9 members during Midterm that was 10% during baseline (**Chart-5**).



### 3.3. Persons with Disabilities:

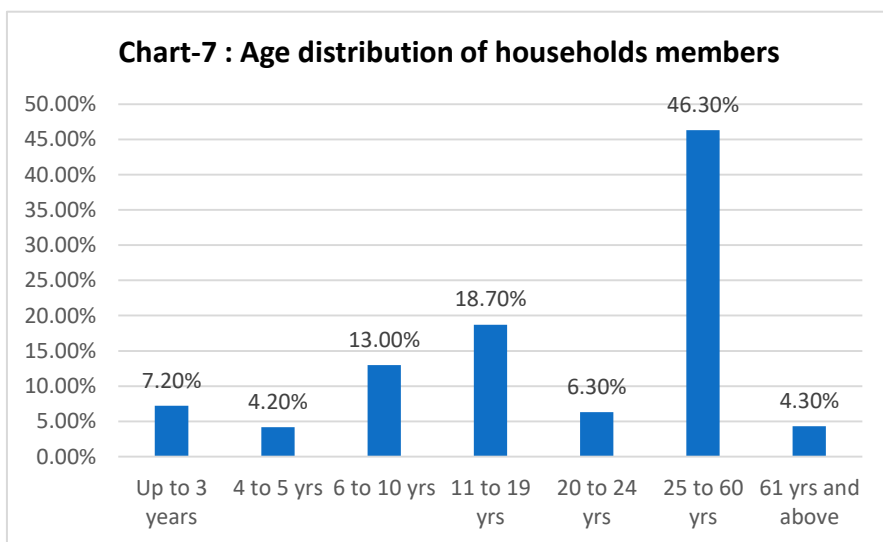
The study found that there are 2.3% persons with disabilities among total respondents during MTR period.

Prevalence of disabilities are found more in Jamalpur, Rangpur, Kurigram and Gaibandha district. **Chart-6** depicted the distribution of disabilities by type. The project has developed a focal person for each of ward committee level for dealing the disability issues.



### 3.4. Distribution of Household Population by Age

The study finding shows that among total family members, 7.2% are less than 3 years children during baseline period and 4.2% are in between 4-5 years of age (baseline 4.6 years). The project is operating preprimary schools for these children in remote areas. The 6-10 years children number remain same for both baseline and MTR period. **Adolescent** members (11-19 as defined by SF) are found 19.4% which declined to 18.7% during MTR. The targeted youth (age 20-24 years) are found as 6.3% in MTR study against



5.7% of baseline. The main income earner group age lying between 26-60 years comprised of 46.3% against the baseline figure of 44.60 years. Around 4.3% of total members are old aged against 7% of baseline figure (**please see Chart -7**).

The children (<5 years and 6-10 years) are important to support through for immunization, school enrollment, and reducing the dropout from schools related actions of this project. The adolescent group needs special attention for adolescent health, reducing early marriage, career building and self-esteem development. The population of ages of 20-24 is eligible for TVET training of the project.

### 3.5. *Distribution of Households Members by Education*

Out of 4433 household members of 1098 households, 37% did not go to schools and 7.2% are not in school and another 8% are completed in or continuing education in NFPE or madrasah/maqtab. Another 2% can only sign which was .4% during baseline survey. Among Average members, 33.4% could not complete primary schooling yet. Therefore 77.4% members of the target households are deprived from six years of schooling which was 74.4% members.

In addition, 4% members have passed Secondary School Certificate against baseline figure of 2.6% and 2% have passed Higher Secondary School (an auto pass was given in 2021 due to covid-19) against 1.5% of baseline findings. 1% have completed Bachelor degree during MTR against 0.8% of base line figure as well as 0.3% have completed post-graduation against .1(**please see Table -6**).

It is further revealed with sorrow that among the school aged children, the enrollment rate has sharply

	Gaibandha		Kurigram		Sherpur		Mymensingh		Jamalpur		Rangpur		Average	
	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR
<b>No School</b>	42	30	41	43	35	34	38	40	40	40	48	35	41	37
<b>Pre-School</b>	.3	1	.2	.1	.4	.4	.5	.1	.7	.1	.7	.6	.5	.4
<b>Sign only</b>	0	.3	.2	3	0	3	.4	2	.7	1	.7	3	.3	2
<b>Class I</b>	10	6	9	3	5	4	10	8	10	6	6	3	8	5
<b>Class II</b>	6	4	6	4	6	5	6	4	7	5	5	3	6	4
<b>Class III</b>	6	4	6	6	5	5	7	5	6	5	5	6	6	5
<b>Class IV</b>	6	4	8	5	6	5	5	5	7	5	3	3	6	5
<b>Class V</b>	8	12	9	13	7	9	8	11	6	9	6	10	7	11
Class VI	4	4	3	6	5	3	4	4	4	2	5	5	4	4
Class VII	3	4	3	3	5	4	4	3	3	3	4	5	4	4
Class VIII	2	5	2	6	4	6	5	3	2	3	4	6	3	5
Class IX	2	2	2	4	5	4	3	5	2	2	4	5	3	4
SSC	2	4	2	2	5	6	2	3	1	3	3	5	3	4
HSC	2	3	.3	2	3	3	.9		2	2	1	3	2	2
Bachelor	0	1	.2	.4	2.6	2	.5	1	.1	.7	.8	.7	.7	1
Masters	0	.4	0	.4	.4	.7	.1	0	0	.3	0	0	.1	.3
Vocational	6	0	8	0	6	.1	5	0	9	0	4	.1	6	0
NFPE/ Others	0	14	0	10	0	6	0	8	0	6	0	7	6	8

declined to 27.9% which was 77.9% during baseline period (79.3% among boys declined to 28.4% and 76.6% drop to 27.2% during MTR among girls (**Table-27**). Many causes were mentioned for this sharp falling during discussion, SSI and FGD such as students of class 8, 9, and 10 are mostly engaged with different job and many of the girl children got married during the lock down period.

## Outcome specific Analysis

### **Outcome 1: Increased engagement of People's Organizations in claiming their rights**

#### **A. Thematic Goal: Building Strong Society**

It has been observed that the project has accomplished most of the targets as set in the indicators at LFA. However, to measure the impact, the overall observation, findings and recommendations are presented under the following sub-sections. The SEEDS project put special emphasis of developing and functioning of the strong civil society mechanism in sustainable manner. For the purpose, the project staff facilitated and undertook different mechanism for empowering the individuals of the targeted BHHs and their communities to claim their rights. Strengthened their ability to hold duty bearers accountable to rights holders (beneficiaries), including persons with disabilities. In order to attain the envisaged outcome, the project has facilitated the beneficiaries to form their small self-help structure called "Self-reliance group (SRG)" those later federated at Village or ward level namely Peoples Organization or Ward Committee comprising of 6-13 SRGs. SEEDS followed a "Human and Institutional Development (HID)" approach that encompasses several dimensions mainly tied to the strengthening of human and social capital. It covers:

**Objectives-1:** By end of 2023, 70% of People's Organizations are institutionalized to address basic rights issues of the marginalized communities

- Self-reliance processes, that enable SRGs and POs to develop their capacities in order to organize themselves, identify their development priorities through problem and cause relationship analysis, developing of Family and community Development Plan, arrange joint actions and mobilize and manage resources, at DSRG, POs or community level. The development of local dynamics and the adoption of a broader platform approach i.e. **ward and union level platform**, which consists of concentrating the project's activities in selected geographical areas in order to increase its effectiveness and efficiency.
- Empowerment, both at individual and group level, is seen as a means to reduce the *inequity* and *exclusiveness* that hampers the poor in their process of development. It might be, for example, the right for women in their households to have the control over the resources they generate, or more generally the development of capabilities for analyzing problems and their causes. For the poor and marginalized segments of the community, it could be the access to decision-making processes in order to represent their interests and raise their voice and finding the way to reduce inequalities and exclusions.
- The redefinition of relations between the stakeholders aims at re-distributing the power between, the poor' organizations on the one hand, and the market actors and the support organizations on the other. This new relationship promoted through two approaches – firstly, the development of self-reliance, and, secondly, the development and the strengthening of an enabling environment (support organizations, service providers) that effectively contribute to these efforts.

#### **3.6. Family Development Plan, SRGs and Ward Committee`s plan and function**

During visit of the SRGs, Ward Committees and Union committees, the MTR team found that SRGs, and Ward Committees have conducted problem and cause relation exercised and based on the findings, SRG and Ward Committees developed their SRG and Ward level plan. Besides, every members of the SRGs has developed their individual level Family Development Plan (FDP). All the plans were developed with the facilitation support of the project staff. The FDPs mainly covered the individual household level economic and better living conditions improvement aspects whereas the SRG level plan includes how they support the FDPs of the members and relate them the members with different support and services. On the other hand, Ward Committee has recently evolved and their plan encompasses the community aspects and how to support the to realize SRG`s plan.



However in some cases, the MTR team found that problems or causes as identified during problem analysis process were not addressed during development of SRG and Ward level plan. Rather normal and regular activities of the households are included in the individual level FDPs and SRGs and it is difficult to distinguish where SEEDS supports will contribute. It was sometimes difficult to distinguish the differences between these two plans.

### **3.7. Self-Reliance Groups**

The selected households of the project has formed small groups comprising 6-13 households which is known as SRG. They do regular meetings on fortnightly basis Fortnightly/Monthly meeting cum awareness raising /information sharing sessions. The awareness session sensitized community women on different social and human issues specially education, livelihood, health, rights and justice. Meeting has been found the main source to gather small group members for discussing the development issues. Project staff members have been playing vital role in the groups for developing the capacity of members. The attendance of members in these meetings found more than 90% (source: group resolution book), but at the same time, the evaluation participants could not recall the major issues of discussion or lessons they learned from the sessions in almost 80% cases. The evaluator had scope to study and inspect the minute books and other different documents of the visited small groups mainly written by the project field staff. In many cases, the MTR team did not find the resolution book and sometimes (if found not updated).

During visit of households and SRGs, it is observed that most of activities planned for first 3 years have been achieved though there are concern of quality. They have initiated collective vegetable gardening, develop the list of the eligible people for different safety net and services as well as made lobby with respective authorities. For example: repairing of road, access to government or union Parishad owned land for commercial cultivation of vegetable etc. The SRG level plan creates volunteerism, enthusiasm, and collective spirit to address the members' issues.

It was also revealed that the small group members have still hesitation to identify the 'ownership' of group. It means group members were not SEEDS appropriately educated about the group ownership and its benefit. The project staff are also not that much aware of self-help approach and they are not aware of handing over responsibilities to the group leaders in a planned manner. Almost 100% SRG members also received health and nutrition and disaster risk reduction (DRR) training organized by the project.

It was further observed that the SRG level plans are periodically reviewed that accelerate the group dynamics. As FDPs are seen as the trigger point to initiate all sorts of achieving better living standards for a households while SRG plan contributed to local development interventions. The project is being addressed these planned activities systematically and strategically. The representative of SRGs have participated local Union Parishad Budget planning process, and communicated with Union Parishad and government line agencies for getting access to services and entitlements. A few number of SRG representatives also included in different local committees and social structures. Few of the SRGs also create access to public resources such as Road side vegetable cultivation and use the public land for RRC purpose.

During evaluation meetings with the SRG members, it was felt that around 40% members in SRGs were weak in voice raising. The weaker members were found less vocal while the powerful (comparatively solvent and educated) members were found vocal and usually they take the decisions of SRG. It would be a challenge for the project to bring the weaker women in front line of the leadership and to capacitate them. In fact, in presence of the powerful women the weaker members rarely give their opinion and speak out.

### **3.8. Peoples Organization/Ward Committee**

With the representatives from each Small Groups, Ward level Committees are formed called as Peoples Organizations. These second level platforms have been evolved as the community



organization in line with the ward boundary that is the lowest administrative boundary in Bangladesh under Union Parishad (Local Government Body). In all Upazilas SEEDS has successfully brought all the small groups under PO / WC. All the PO / WC were found newly organized (last one year to six months). The POs are generally formed after 1.5 years of the formation of SRGs. In the Union Committees, community service providers as well as the representative from Shonglap Forum are also included and selected good people from the community also included as the advisory members. The key objective is to unite them in social structure where they can meet together and gather the strength for advocacy and empowerment. It has been learned that with the support of small groups and PO / WC, project has successfully organized different community events like hand wash day, Corona prevention awareness, hygiene practice materials distribution, vaccination camp etc. Community people i.e., PO / WC members also resisted several early marriages. They have been working on eliminating dowry and trafficking. It was also difficult to establish the role and perception of the leaders about the SRGs, WC and Union Committees.

During discussions with the PO / WC members, it has been observed that they could not distinguish the role of Ward committee and Union Committee. Even some of the SRGs also do not know the members who represent in POs and/or Union committee from their behalf. It is further observed that the staff are driving seat of all activities of POs/WCs where the usual practice for self-help group is that staff gradually go in back seat.

### **3.9. Union Committees**

So far only 4 partner NGOs have initiated to form Union Level committees and other two partner PNGOs showed reservations to go for Union Committee such as SUS and Caritas. It seemed by the MTR team that Union Committee was formed in immature stage. PNGOs have developed the byelaws for the PO / WC but the position holders are less aware of their role. As a result, PO / WC were found growing slowly. The confidence, capability, values and responsibility regard to decision making, planning, and initiating and implementing of development activities by PO / WC was found feeble.

Moreover, the staff usually decide when, where, how and what activities will be implemented but, it should be participatory. The PO / WC members were found just participating in the planned activities upon calls from the staff. Still PO / WC are highly dependent on the staff in project implementation. As all are done by staff, the field Staff are puzzled by 185 activities and getting frustrated. They did not conceptualize the issue of how to strengthen POs and how to hand over responsibility.

### **3.10. Fund management**

All the SRGs members were organized into POs. The MTR team found in both SRGs and WARD committees as a platform are dealing the financial management activities. They have accumulated about funds in SRGs, WARD committees, and a good number of Ward Committees have opened bank account also. The funds are coming from 02 sources: savings of the beneficiaries, and the profits from the group joint IGA project. The POs at ward level undertook the revolving loans schemes. They give loan to the members. But the issue is without two organization, the team did not found any transaction in Bank accounts or maintained the accounts in cash book or passbook. There is no resolution of using of fund for lending or income generating purpose. This fund became a big hope for the poor participants to grow further as well as it became a point of threat/tense for being mishandled due to their incapability. The group leaders are facing strong challenges to manage this group fund independently with confidence. The savings at SRG level need to bring together in the ward committees which were initially deposited in the small group.

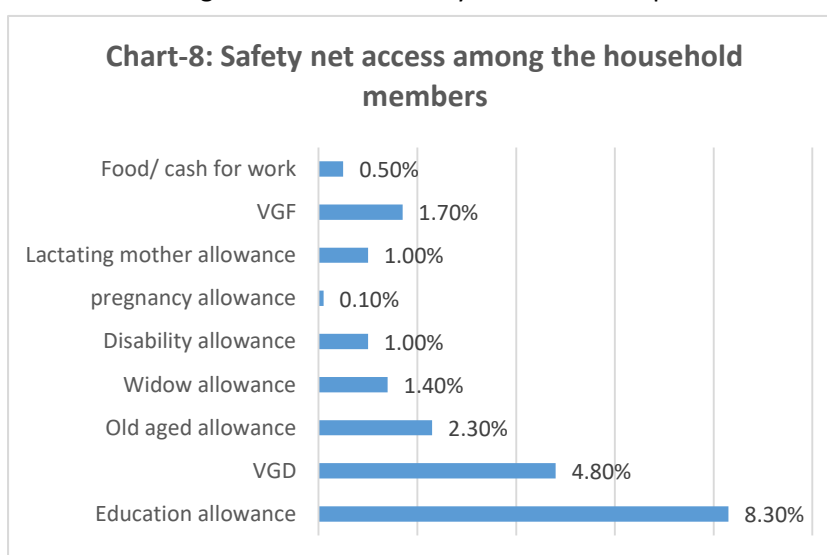
Sustainability of primary group to a great extent depends on its financial strength. Without own resource or fund, the small group wouldn't continue for the long run and would have no attraction to its members. Therefore, to attain the sustainability of the small groups, there should have strong fund management system in the POs. During discussions with the SRG members in evaluation meetings it

was apparently felt that about 75% meetings participants have borrowed money from loan providing organizations MFIs where making savings is prerequisite. However, the participants are saving money in different NGOs including SEEDS. There is no proper fund management guideline and document. It can be load for them in one hand and can be problem if not properly handle. Regular awareness session/activities are not structured or organized. Passbook, resolution of WC on fund management and organized FDP and Homestead gardening along with hygienic households of the beneficiaries in caritas.

### 3.11. Access to GOB services, Safety nets and social structure

From the inception of the project, SRG representatives are maintaining regular communication with local Union Parishads and Upazila level offices. In addition, discussions were held with the Chairman and member of the Union Parishads and other line agencies officials. The review team further observed that the tapping of services from relevant government agencies especially with department of livestock, health, education and local government are functioning well except Phulpur Upazila under Mymensingh district. The POs are working for advocacy with various service agencies and collected resources for implementation though it is not satisfactory due to Corona pandemic.

Project staff organized community meeting, lobbying with influential persons, LGIs and other relevant stakeholders. Seminar/workshops, billboard placing, poster pasting, leaflet distribution, miking etc. were done during corona by the project very professionally. Project has made the existing public service delivery system more functional for the community people and



also ensured best utilization of existing facilities. The sectorial need-based services have been ensured by SEEDS for the livelihood and skill development of the poor women. As result

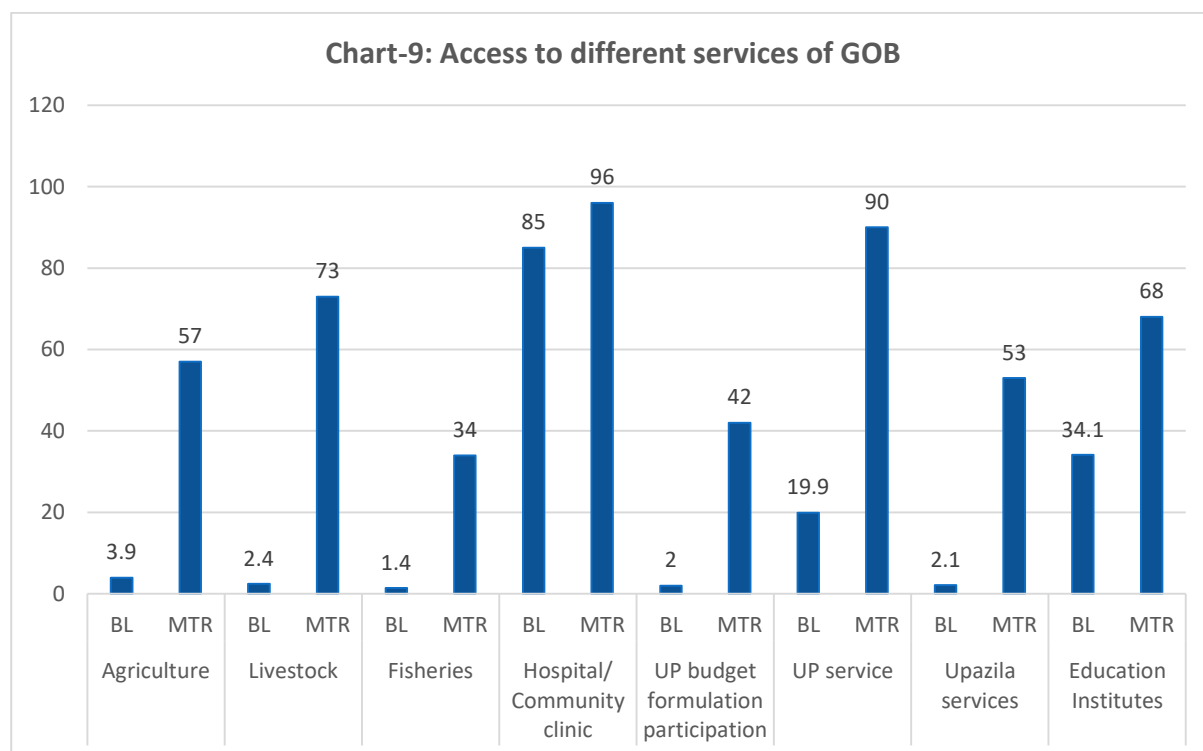
The MTR findings show that So far 22% of members of the BHHs have received services mainly in education allowance, VGD and Widow Allowance (**Chart -8**). Another 28% eligible members of the targeted BHHs are now remain out of any safety net services of Bangladesh government which was 45% during baseline period. However, another 50% members of the targeted households are not eligible to receive any government safety-net support. **The project under Outcome -1 has the target to facilitate people to get more access to safety net support and this effort shall be continued.**

**Therefore, the impact in livelihood is not only the result of only SEEDS project rather many other GOs and NGOs work also impacted through these achievements.**

### 3.12. Access to Government services:

It is further understood from the MTR data analysis that a good number of HHs have received different services (mostly from CSP-Agriculture, SAAO and Livestock service providers) over the period. In agriculture, 53% has reported that they received advisory services and 73% mentioned that they received vaccination and advisory support either from LSP or Livestock office. 96% have visited community clinic for health purpose. In the baseline it was very few such as in agriculture, 3.9% HHs reported that they got services from Agriculture department while 2.4% and 1.4% HHs received

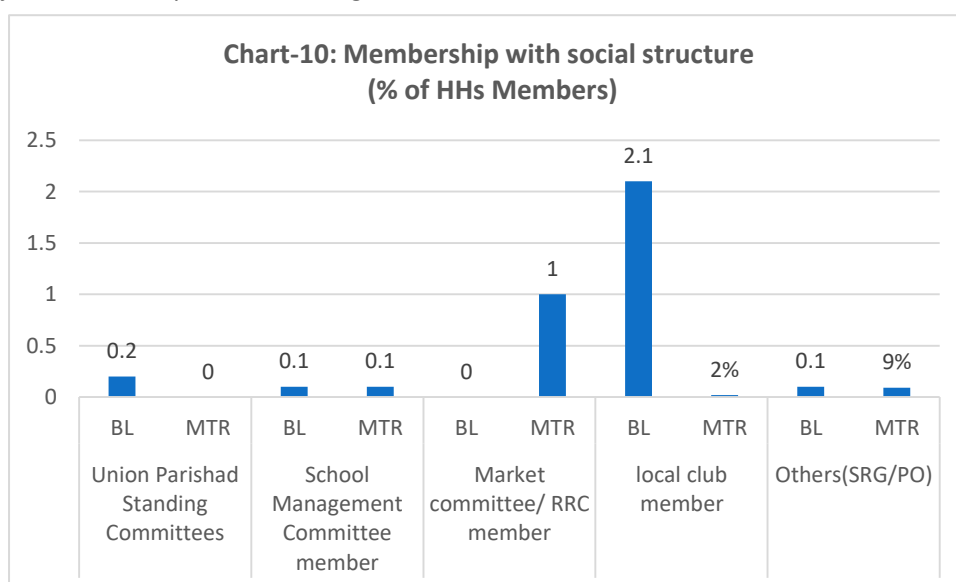
services from livestock and fisheries department (Table-14). In addition, 2.1% respondents reported that they have participated in Union Parishad budget preparation process during baseline period which reached up to 42% during MTR. In addition, another 19% BHHs have received different support from different GOs-NGOs during lock down period. Those who received services, 73%, 57% and 85% are quite satisfied “Good” in a 4 layer of satisfaction level with the services on Livestock, agriculture and community clinic respectively. Among local government services (birth registration, shalish, safety net etc.), 90% BHHs.



### 3.13. HH Members Engaged in Social Structures

The survey and FGD data further revealed that the HH members are engaged in existing different social structures in the project areas. At present, among total households’ members, 0.1% members are involved in school management

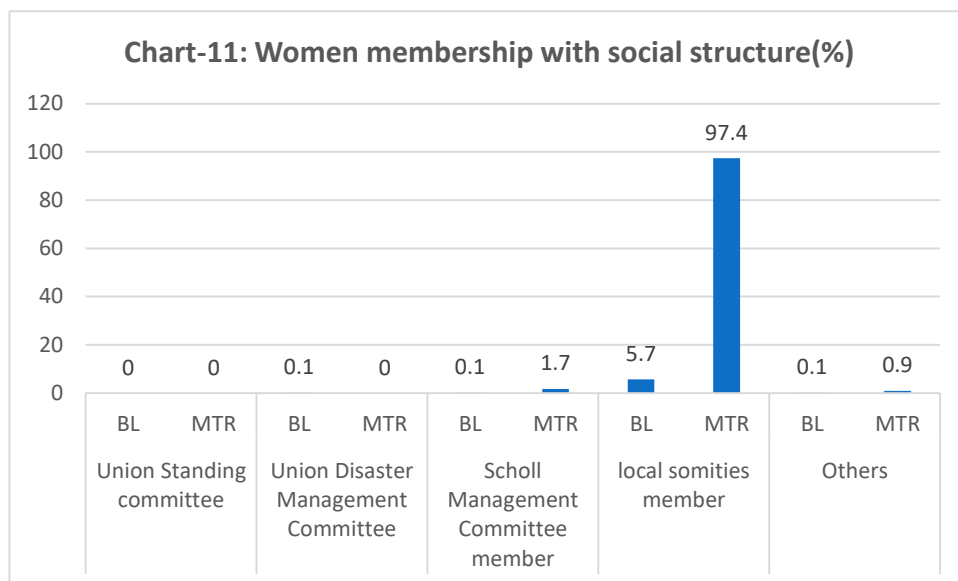
committee and 1% members are engaged in market committee, 2% in local clubs and 9% in SRGs and others. However, among women, 1.7% in school committees and 97% in SRGs. which is a very good indication increased social



capital of the project beneficiaries. The survey data revealed that there was no participation from persons with disabilities in various social structures. So far respondents were not aware about importance of participation from persons with disabilities.

The MTR survey finding reveals an increment of 9.5% over last 3 years in regards to participation in social structure.

The findings show that during MTR, 12% members now have participation in any social structure that was only 2.5% during baseline period. The participation is found mainly in SEEDS organized POs (9%) and local club 2% (Table-



16). However, no standing committees of Union Parishad exists since the new election process was going on during MTR survey process. It is further found almost 100% women are now member in local structures mainly in SEEDS organized SRG (97%), as well as with local Bazar/RRC management committee (1%) and 2% in other clubs. (Table-17). With the support of staff PO/WC mobilized safety net support from duty bearers, repaired housing, food items during lock down period etc. But, still PO/WC found weak in establishing linkage with service providers and doing social works independently.

## B. Thematic Goal: Ensuring inclusive quality education

### ***Outcome 2: Enhanced access to inclusive, quality education for children from vulnerable and marginalized families***

Education is a fundamental human right of every child of Bangladesh. Education is the basics of economic, social and individual development of a person. The children from marginalized and indigenous families living in the hard-to-reach areas are deprived of quality primary

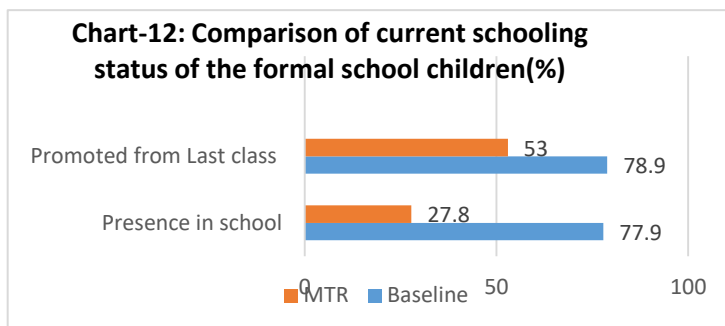
**Objectives -3:** By the end of 2023, 36900 vulnerable and marginalized eligible children have access to quality primary education.

education. Stormy Foundation (SF) is intended to provide quality inclusive education to the targeted children age 4 - 18 years through the “Socio Economic Empowerment with Dignity and Sustainability (SEEDS)” project in 18 sub-districts under Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Kurigram, Rangpur and Gaibandha. The project has targeted 36900 vulnerable and marginalized eligible children have access to quality primary education and 10500 adolescents from marginalized communities are socially and economically empowered to protect their rights. Under the target goal 2 the project intends to provide non-formal education to supplement government’s education program in the hard to reach areas where the poor and marginalized children live and have limited access to the formal primary

education. SF has implementing four types of non-formal education models in the targeted communities to create access to education such as pre-primary school, bridge school, quality education in primary schools and child club.

### 3.14. *Schooling status of Formal Government School Children:*

The information about the present schooling status of the formal school children were obtained in the MTR by asking the parents of students those are also respondent HHs. It is observed that the present schooling status among the children has sharply declined to 27.9% which was 77.9% during the baseline survey (among boys declined to 28.4% from 79.3% and among girls dropped to 27.2% from 76.6%) (**Chart 12**). Many causes were mentioned for this rapid falling during



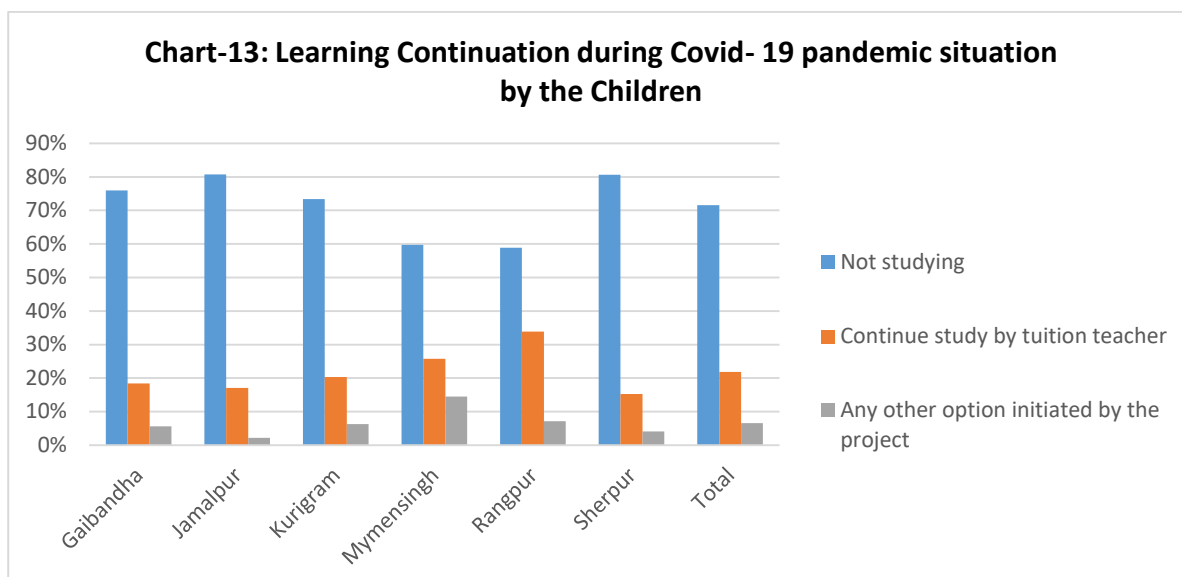
discussion, SSI and FGD such as according to government decision grade 1, 2, 3, 4 children come to school one day in a week. It has changed their habit. The students lose their interest because out of 6 school days they come to the school only one day. On the other hand, secondary students of class 7, 8, 9, and 10 are mostly engaged with different job and some of the girls got married during the lock down period.

Similarly MTR survey data shows that in the government primary schools, a sharp decrease of student promotion from last class i.e. from 78.9% to 53%, which was 25.9% from previous year (2021 to 2022), which is almost similar for boys and girls though there was an auto promotion in for all students. One of the causes mentioned by the teachers that during school closer due to Covid lock down, some children admitted in the madrasas.

To verify, the team visited a session of class-III in Rangpur and found that out of 24 students, only 7 were attended in school. The teachers of the school do not agree that it is drop out rather they called it as absenteeism. They are hopeful that the student will return to school when the situation will be normal. The drop out or absenteeism is found high in Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha and Jamalpur.

### 3.15. *Schooling of children during COVID 19 pandemic situation:*

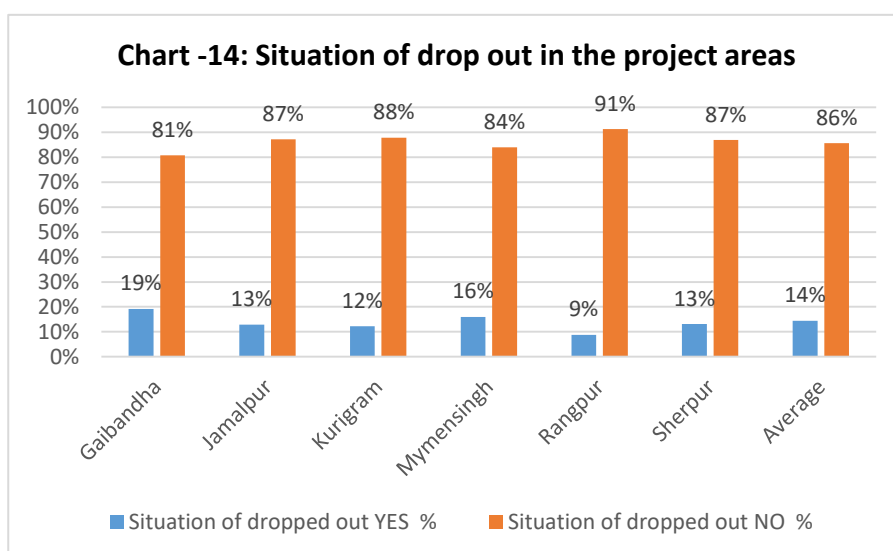
Chart 3 presents district wise status of continuation of study of the children during COVID 19 pandemic situation. Due to long time school closer 83% in Jamalpur followed by 81% in Sherpur, 76% in Gaibandha, 73% in Kurigram, 60% in Mymensingh and 59% in Rangpur did not continuing their study during the school closer. There were many causes for this situation such as government provided some online classes but many of the guardian in the rural areas have no android phone, lack of uninterrupted internet support, many of the guardian have not the capacity to bear the internet cost and children have lack of interest in the education as mentioned in the KII and FGDs.



### 3.16. Dropout situation:

Drop out from the education is an acute problem in Bangladesh. Each year many children dropout from primary and secondary education. In recent years drop out reduced from the primary education level as a result of different measures from the government and other actors. The dropout persists in the marginalized and socioeconomically backward section of the people in the country. SF has been implementing the project in the six districts where the marginalized, poor, and ethnic minority people living. During COVID 19 pandemic people living

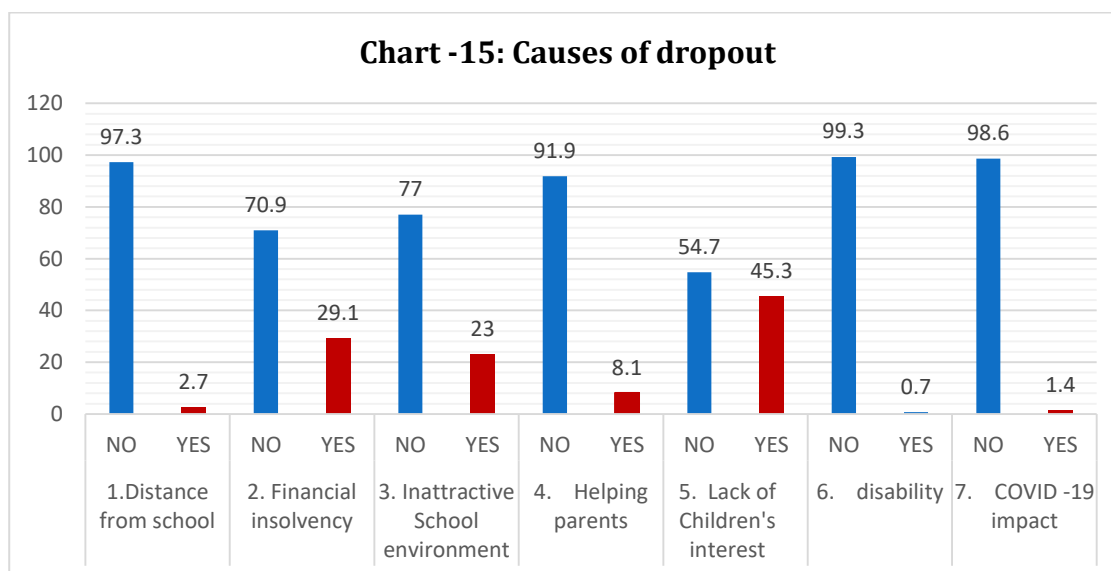
in different strata are negatively affected. Specially the children's education has been disrupted, many of them dropout from the education. Children who have been studying in the secondary level were drop out. It is found in the graph that highest number of dropouts happened in Gaibandha (19.20% followed by 16% in Mymensingh and the lowest drop out happened in the Rangpur district which is 8.8%. During FGD, SSI and KII with parents, SMC and primary school teachers opinioned during FGD that due to long time school closer many boys lost their interest in education as a result they have dropout from education system. Another important cause of dropout is boys involved in the income generating actives to help their families to cope with the COVID 19 pandemic crisis while school dropout among girls at secondary school has increased due to child marriage as the parents take decision to get married to their girls is safer than without schooling.



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### Causes of drop out:

The following chart illustrates seven type of causes of dropout of the children from formal education. The bar chart shows that the significant causes of dropout is lack of children’s interest in the education which is 45.3 % and the next important causes of drop out is financial instability of the families which is 29.1% followed by unattractive school environment which is 23% and the rest of the causes of dropout are helping parents (8.1%), distance from school (2.7%), effect of COVID 19 (1.4%) and disability (.7%) .



The Chart 15 displays the percentages of causes of dropout in six working districts of the projects. The MTR survey data revealed that Rangpur district has the highest rate of dropout due to financial insolvency of the family which is 60%. The survey data also found that in Kurigram the causes of dropout mentioned is school are not attractive to the children (50%). The data also revealed that the significant causes of dropout in Sherpur and Jamalpur district is children are not interested in education which is 71.4% and 70.4 % respectively. The other reason for dropout is showing in the table 15 district wise. **(Chart 15)**

### 3.17. Non-Formal Primary Education:

This program is supplementing the government’s education program in hard-to-reach areas where marginalized children live in, have limited access to formal primary education. SF is implementing several types of non-formal models in the community to create access to education.

### Pre-primary School:

The preschool intervention is one of the successful programs of SF. It has brought benefits for the very young children who are not able to school far away from their home. As a result of the preschool activities children developed their communication skills, familiar with the institutional environment of the school, their socialization skill enhances, learn basic competency of the language, numeracy and develop their motor skills. SEED project is operating pre-primary school for the 4-5 years of age children in the project areas. Pre-primary schooling is very useful for the very young children. It helps them to prepare for the formal schooling. SF is providing two types of pre-primary education to the 4-5 years old children. The first one is one-year duration pre-primary education following the



governments NCTB curriculum. Pre-school children are very spontaneous. They can introduce themselves very nicely following some rules. They are courageous and no fear and follow rules nicely. They can recite rhyme with body movement and can sing national anthem. They have learned Bangla and English alphabet and number up to 20. Most of them can read and write alphabet and number nicely. Can tell the name of bird, animals, name of seven days a week. The center is decorated with nicely but lack chart and corner materials such as days of the week, Bangla alphabet, number chart, picture of animal and so on. The five organizations SUS, US, ESDO, RDRS and GUK is running one year pre-school center for a group of 5 years old children. After completion of preschool, they enroll in the nearest formal school.

The community specially guardian and teachers are aware about the benefit of the preschool. In the rural area's road communication developed and many local transports are running in the road. So, it is very difficult for the small children to go to government primary school. The parents are very busy with their household and livelihood work. It is difficult for them to bring the children every day in the school. Considering all these it is necessary to a learning center near to the home of the children. So, it would be a very useful to build a learning center in the community. Then it would be possible for the community to run the school.

### MLE based pre-primary education

The other hand Caritas is implementing two years duration mother tongue based MLE curriculum in its working areas. They are running 30 MLE preprimary schools. Out of 30 MLE schools 25 in Garo language and 5 Koch languages. MLE school follow own language in the first year and following year is NCTB curriculum emphasis on Bangla medium of instruction. After completion of preschool and MLE school all the graduated children are transferred to the nearest government primary school or any other formal in the locality. Besides this, SF is implementing a mother tongue based MLE Center, where ethnic children learning through their own language and then bridging in the formal education system.

The preschool has a great impact in the community. The mother and CMC members are very pleased to see the performance of their children. Teacher of the nearest primary school are keen to get these children in grade 1 of their school because of the performance of the preschooler.

Hatia Vobesk Pre-primary School in Kurigram Sadar operated by ESDO. The name of the pre-school teacher is Shanj Pervin. Her education qualification is SSC. In 2021 twenty Children's were enrolled in her class. During COVID 19, she divided the children in three area base groups and provided support moving from one group to another. She had spent 1 hour for each group. It was a very good strategy to support the learners during the pandemic situation. It was observed during the school visit. The Children's performance was very nice. They have learned song, rhyme, Bangla and English alphabet and number up to twenty. They can read names of the week. Display of four corner such as 1) imagination corner, 2) block and language, 3) Book and picture corner, and 4) play and puzzle are visible. These corners are very helpful for the learning of the children.

The center is decorated with colored poster, different chart such as days of the week, Bangla alphabet, number chart, picture of animal and so on. They are now enrolled in the government primary school. Both community and schoolteachers are very happy to see the performance of the children. In these remote areas the community got a permanent learning center which was built by SKS foundation under Shouhardo project. This teacher is working about twenty years under different projects. After closing of a project community provided her salary and she continue the learning center. It can be good example of sustainability. A trained teacher and the learning center is there. The community experienced the benefit of the preschool activities and now they are ready to spent some money for their children, when there is no project support. The CMS and parents express their commitment that they will be able to keep continuation of the learning center if the project support end. The project staff should discuss these issues with the guardian, community, and CMC.



Due to COVID 19 pandemic, all the educational institution was closed. SF continue the preschool activities; all preschools were fully functional in small groups. During COVID 19 pandemic regular activities of the preschool disrupted classes were conducted class two groups three days in a week.

The guardian of the preschool children recognized that the preschool activities are very helpful for the children. Children have courage and learn many disciplines. The guardian and CMC attended in the FGD think that after the end of the project it will not be possible to continue the pre-school center because communities are not financially solvent. Therefore, they request to continue the pre-primary center due to the continuous need of the community. The sustainability issues were not discussed. The project staff should discuss this issue with the guardian, community, and CMC



#### **Gaps identified and areas of improvement:**

- Display of four corner are not visible such as 1) imagination corner, 2) block and language, 3) Book and picture corner, and 4) play and puzzle corner in the preschool center visited by the MTR team in most of the areas except ESDO in Kurigram. These four corners are very helpful for the learning of the children.
- In some cases, the classroom is small in size. The classroom must be appropriate size

#### **3.18. Bridge School:**

A Bridge school is a temporary study center established in a government primary school catchment area to support children from the marginalized communities who have dropped out either from grade 3 or grade 4. The teacher is applying the multigrade model approach in this Bridge school. After one year the graduate children are enrolled in formal school where they have been one-year follow-up support. The target age group of the Bridge school children is 9-12 years. In 2020 the project identified dropout children and enrolled them in the formal primary school. The MTR team met with three girls who were dropout from grade 4 now they are continuing their education in secondary school at grade six. They are living in a poor fishermen family. They were dropout from the primary school. The project staff identified them with the help of the primary school teacher and talk with their parents. After that the parents were motivated to send them school again. It was a very good initiative taken by the project. Many children now continuing their education due to the project intervention. The project staff regularly maintain regular follow up with these children and support them to continue their education. In 2021 there was no bridge school in the project areas because in most of the targeted formal school have no drop out children.



### 3.19. *Child Club:*

The project has introduced child club for slow learners of the formal primary school. A child club facilitator has appointed in the targeted low performing primary school in the project working areas. The child club identifies 20-25 low performing children from grade 3 and 4 with the help of respective school teachers. The main purpose of establishing child club is to provide coaching support to the weaker student of class 3 and 4 who are at risk of dropout. This child club is creating an opportunity for slow learners to obtain learning opportunities outside their school hours. Child club facilitators teach Bangla, English, and mathematics. It is evident that one third of the children in grade 3 and 4 have lack of grade 1 level competency. It has happened due to unattractive teaching learning process, lack of child friendly environment, overcrowded classroom in a class deters a teacher from giving proper attention to all students equally. As a result, many children fall behind in learning and these students are most at dropout risk before completing primary education. Regrettably, most of the children who are behind in education in primary schools are from poor and marginalized families, and most of the students from the remote rural areas are first-generation learners. There is none in their families to assist them properly in their learning process. Child club operate three days a week and the Average duration of each session is 1.5 hours. Overall, child club is a safe place where students are learning in an informal and enjoyable environment e.g., learning through singing and listening to songs, playing math's and language games, doing activities, using different aids, etc.

The MTR team found that the child club concept is innovative and effective for the weaker student of the formal school. Both the school management committee and local communities appreciated these initiatives and acknowledge that the overall learning performance of the child club children improved. The MTR found that there was a general awareness among the communities of quality education, but the management of the school is poor, and teachers are not committed to teach students. Due to COVID 19 long time school closure the SMC and PTA were not active. To support the weaker student to improve their learning is a challenging task. The MTR team found that all though the children are enrolled in class 3 and 4 but they did not achieve the learning competency of grade 1 and 2 so far. And it is a challenging task for the facilitator to provide support the children to improve their learning gap at individual level. The facilitator also has capacity gap. They have received 5 days training and a guidebook from the project to support the children. After discussion with the facilitator, it is found that the training is designed to address the learning gap considering grade two. But many of the child club children have learning gap at grade 1 level which is not addressed in the training. As a result, some child club children improved their performance in Bangla. But those who have learning gap at grade 1 level are not improve their performance up to the expected level. MTR team found there are some children who are not able to read Bangla properly. On the other hand, it is found that children are comparatively very weak in English and Mathematics. The project should further address this issue. The facilitator needs to know how to assess the subject specific competency level at the very beginning of the starting of the coaching support. Otherwise, the children will not improve their learning performance at the expected level. The facilitator must insure need-based support to the children.

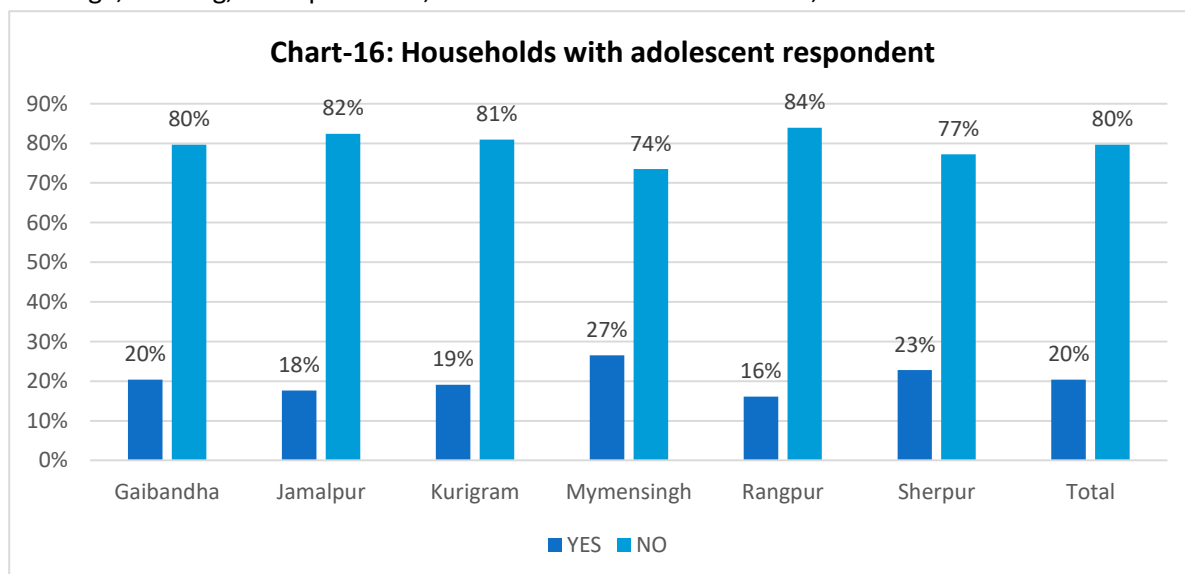
### Outcome 3: Adolescents from marginalized communities are socially and economically empowered to protect their rights

#### 3.20. Shonglap: Adolescents Empowerment

Shonglap is one of the leading programs of the Stromme Foundation in Bangladesh. Shonglap is a community-based interactive one-year education program especially designed for rural

**Objectives -4:** By the end of 2023, 10500 adolescents from marginalized communities are socially and economically empowered to protect their rights.

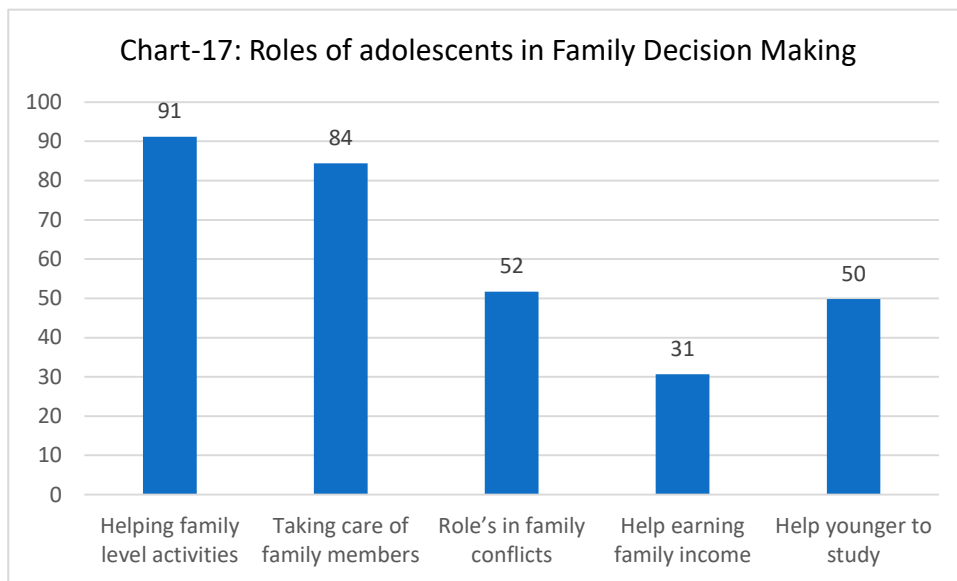
adolescent girls and boys either not attending school or dropped out (from class 1 to 10) within the age group of 11-18 years old. It is important to mention here that there are 20.4% population among the surveyed households are aged 11-19 years. During the field visit and FGD with adolescent revealed that the project is successfully mobilized the targeted adolescent girls and boys. The program aims to empower girls and boys to overcome their challenges and take control of their lives. It also works to address gender inequality, stop child marriage, reduce gender inequality, violence against children and women in the households and communities in the project working areas/where SF intervenes. Shonglap members come to the Shonglap center runs three days a week for one hour. Shonglap is facilitated by an animator from the same locality. Shonglap animator recruited by the implementing NGOs. Most of the Shonglap animators are undergraduate students and they are more senior to the Shonglap member. Shonglap animators conduct different issue base sessions through the participatory method. The number of members of Shonglap is 20 to 25 and most of the Shonglap are girls. Through the Shonglap session they have primary health care, puberty, cleanliness, reproductive health, complexities of reproductive health, measures to safeguard reproductive health, family planning issues, safe motherhood and care during pregnancy, knowledge on diseases and let others understand HIV/AIDS, child right, gender equity, adolescent girls 10 learning issues and life skills. Child marriage, drug, superstition, harmful social norms, disaster and so on.



This section will discuss about the issues of the adolescent’s girls. The MTR study could capture the views of 206 adolescent HHs out of 1115 HHs, through survey and 246 girls through FGDs. The issues are related to puberty, reproductive health, personal hygiene, child marriage, violence against women and girls etc. Following are major findings of the survey:

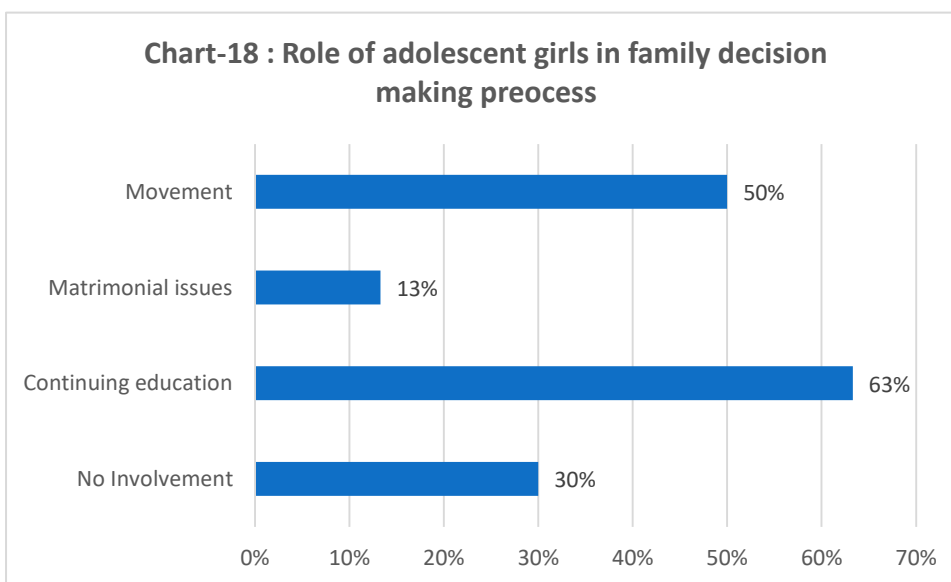
### 3.21. Adolescent Girls Role in the Family

The MTR found that 91.2 % adolescent girls contributing in different household level activities. Whereas it was 88.36 in the baseline survey. On the other hand 84.4% adolescent girls are taking care of family members, 51.7% adolescent are taking roles in conflicts management in the family levels, whereas 30.7% are helping in earning family income as well as 49.8% are helping younger siblings to their study it is a great contribution during COVID 19 situation to continue education of the younger children of the family, however survey data revealed that 13.7% are not participating in any kind of household activities (Chart-17).



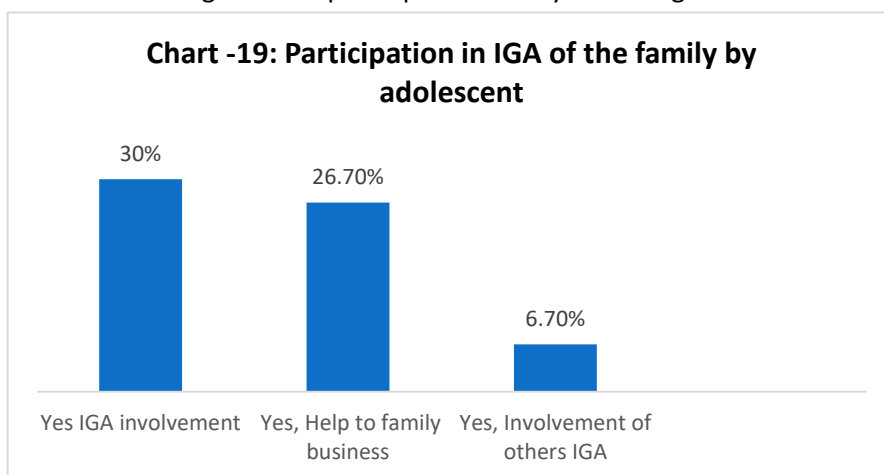
### 3.22. Adolescent Girls' Participation in Family Decision Making

The MTR survey data revealed that average 75% girls are participating in family decision making process which is 31.58% improvement compared to the baseline data 43.42 that is a significant achievement of the project. MTR survey data found that 63% of girls are involved in the family decision making process to continue their education. For matrimonial issues, 13.3% girls have contributed in the family decision making process which was 8.41 % less compare to the baseline. In regards to movement, on the other hand 50% girls reported that they contribute in making decision related to go outside whereas baseline data has showed that only 2.2% girls were making decision related to go outside (Chart -18).



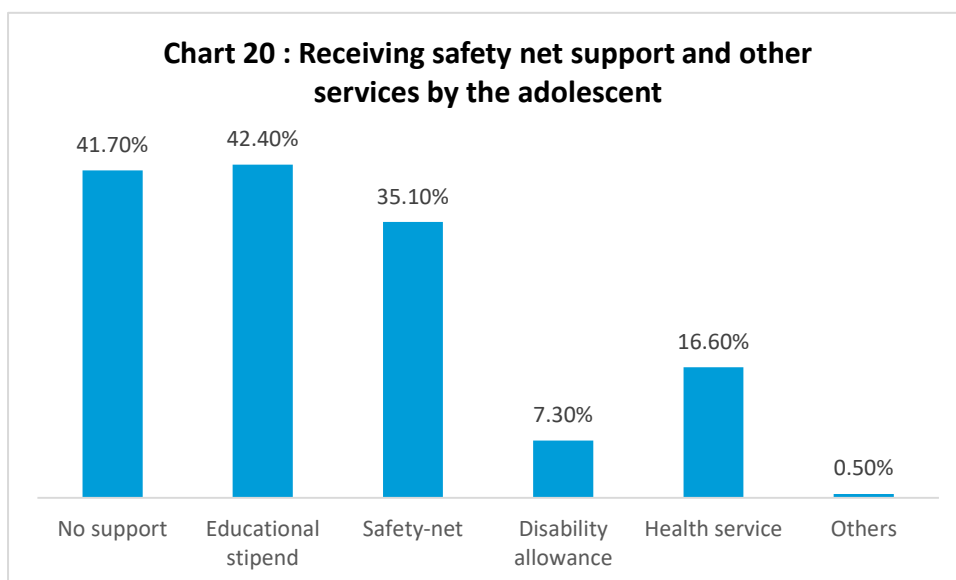
### 3.23. Adolescent Involved with IGA

The MTR study results shows that 30% girls have participation in any income generation activities which was 7.23% in the baseline survey. Among those are participating(30%), 26.7% reported that they do support their parents for family business enterprise, while it was 14.46% in the baseline survey. Another 6.7% girls support to the family in different ways (Chart-19).



### 3.24. Adolescent Involved with different safety net

The MTR study found that 58% of adolescent girls are getting safety net support which is 14% improvement compare to the baseline survey. In the baseline survey findings (21%). It is a significant achievement of the project intervention. It is also found that 42.4% girls have been receiving educational allowance in six project supported districts, during the baseline survey it was only 18.52%. MTR data shows

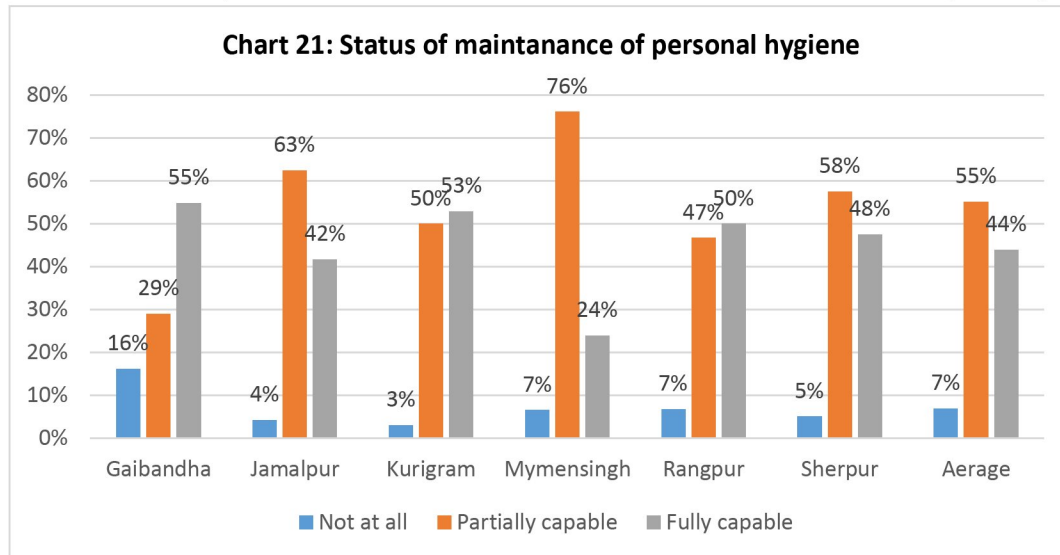


that Jamalpur district has highest number of disability allowance 20.8%.

### 3.25. Adolescent awareness and practice in maintaining personal hygiene

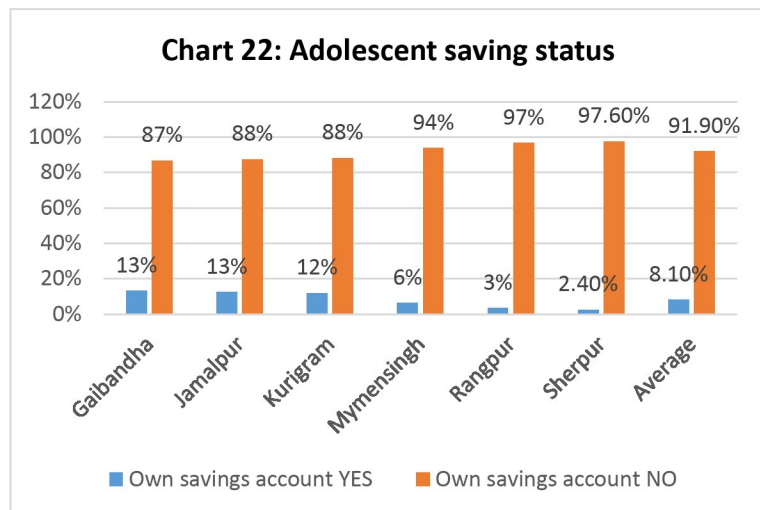
The MTR survey has captured the practice level of menstrual hygiene, personal cleanliness of the adolescents' girls. It is found from the data that 55.1% girls partially capable and 44 % girls are fully capable to maintain their personal hygiene issues. It is noted that the FGD with adolescents' girls

conducted by the female data enumerators only. (table 36)



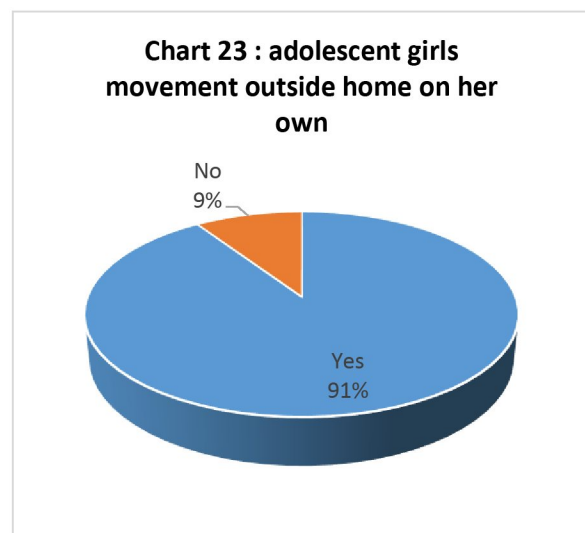
### 3.26. Adolescent saving status

MTR data shows that only 8.1% adolescent girls have saving account. During FGD with adolescent girls found that due to COVID 19 pandemic situation country wide log down had a negative impact on the family income, as a consequence of that adolescent girls are not able to continue their saving all though they have received IGA training and opening bank account.



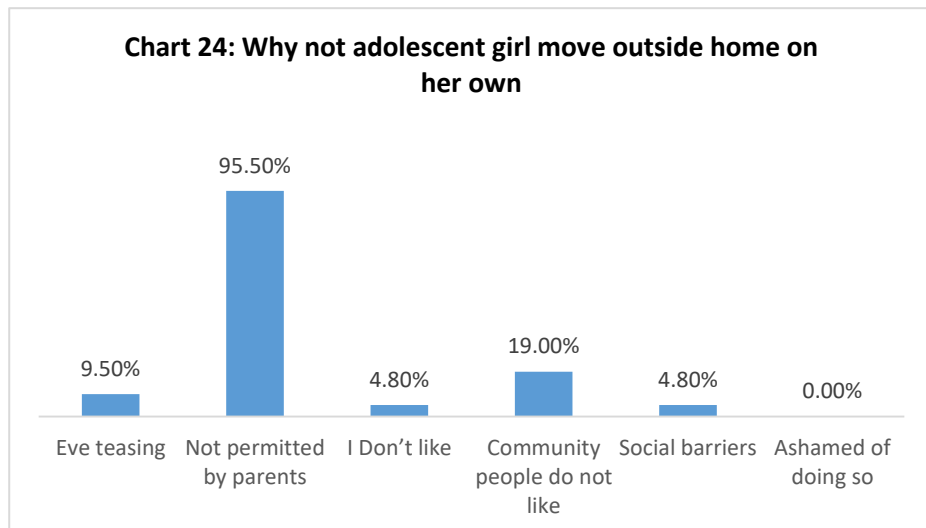
### 3.27. Mobility of Adolescent girls outside the home:

MTR survey data shows that average 90.6% adolescent girls go outside of the home on their own only 9.5% girls respond, they do not go outside of the home on their own. Those who were not go outside of the home on their own mentioned the major causes of not going to outside of the home on their own are parents do not allow them to go outside, community people do not like, eve teasing and social barriers. The MTR data shows average 95.5 % girls mentioned they do not go outside of the home as their parents do not allow them to go outside, whereas 19% mention that community people does not like that girls go outside with their own, 9.5%





mentioned eve teasing is the another causes of girls not go outside of home on their own and 4.8 %

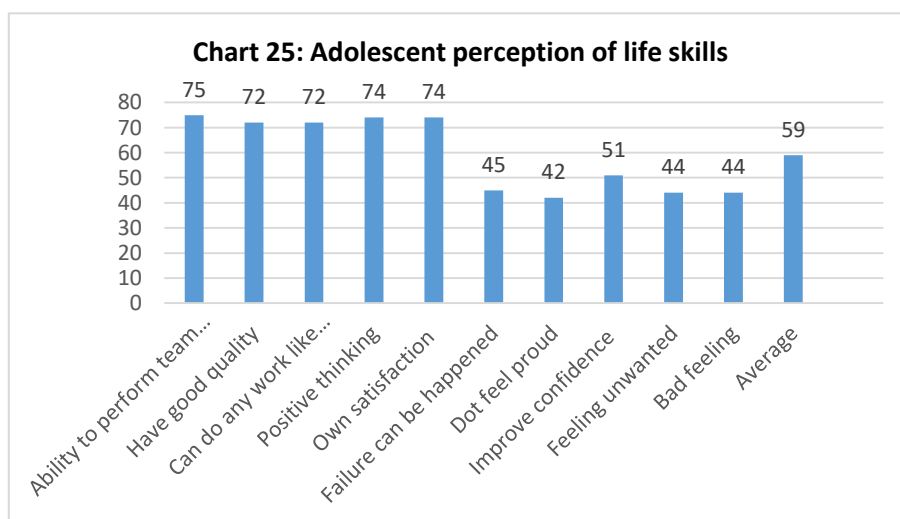


mentioned social barrier is a cause of free movement of girls outside of their home. The district specific data revealed that in Jamalpur sent percent girls mentioned they go out side of the on their own followed by Sherpur 97.6%, Kurigram 91.2%,

Mymensingh 87.5%, Gaibandha 86.8% the lowest in Rangpur 80%. For more understanding district wise data were given in the **table 38**.

### 3.28. Adolescent life skills enhanced:

MTR data shows that average 59.3% the girls enhanced their life skills (as opined by the respondent adolescents that they are agreed on above 10 attributes of life skills). Average 73.4% girls opined that they acquire more self-esteem (i.e. ability



to perform team task, feel good quality, can do any work like others, can think positively and have satisfaction on herself). On the other hand 45.2% girls feel that they have failure in life, they have nothing to feel proud, they need to improve their confidence, they some time feel unwanted and have bad feeling. For district specific information available in the graph.

### 3.29. Shonglap Forum

From FGD it is revealed that after one year, the Shonglap members' graduates as Shonglap Forum. About 60% Shonglap members graduated as Shonglap forum member. This forum is a greater network or platform where adolescents continue their activities as social change agents. From the FGD discussion it has been found that

- Shonglap girls and boys received 5 days training on IGA. Through this training they have learn about vegetable gardening, poultry farming, FDP. They have learnt about savings, opening bank account. However, due to COVID 19 they were not able to make saving.

- Due to COVID 19 group were divided into four small groups and lesson conducted on by on. This strategy helps to continue the Shonglap activities.
- Due to COVID 19 pandemic early marriage of girls and child labor of boys increased. They have conducted campaign against early marriage and in some cases, they were succeeded. They also conducted safe back to school campaign and protest on family level violence and now the women is leaving peacefully with her husband and in laws.
- They have learned about the demerits of the early marriage and willing to continue their education and are determined to build a better future.

#### Gaps identified

- Shonglap graduates have conceptual gaps on life skills and gender equity. The animator also has same conceptual gaps
- Due to COVID 19 pandemic it was not possible to organize mass gathering.

### C. Thematic Goal-3: Creating livelihood & job opportunities

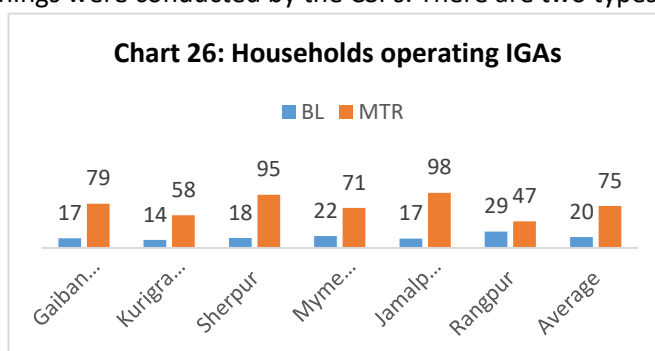
#### Outcome 4. Families achieve economic empowerment to secure a sustainable livelihood

In order to attain the outcome, the has laid down a number of interventions such as provide training and knowledge on better productivity of homestead base assets and resources, establish and link community service provision, facilitate to establish commercial village and linking the beneficiary's products with output market actors. Provide job-oriented trade and vocational trainings for the etc. This section will discuss on the issues accordingly:

**Objective-2:** 80% targeted families have improved sustainable livelihood

#### 3.30. Promotion of community service providers (CSP)

The MTR survey result shows that 100% SRG members received homestead gardening, poultry and livestock rearing training from SEEDS. The trainings were conducted by the CSPs. There are two types of CSP in the project i.e.(i) Agriculture Service Provider and (ii) Livestock Service Provider. The CSP received some basic training from the SEEDS but most of them previously trained by different agencies. The team has met with 9 CSPs and tried to capture their experience. They informed that most of them are doing such advisory services from their social accountability. The LSP particularly have mentioned that they do not need money for their session rather they would be happy to extend their support as business since that will be sustainable. However, the agriculture CSP is not found always having good knowledge and information. It is much difficult to ensure that the training have effectively built up the capacity of the recipients in terms of their knowledge on production technology, updated verities and techniques for better yield etc. The CSP have been providing SEEDS has provided necessary IGA training to the input receivers such as; (a) poultry training (b) livestock training, (c) homestead gardening with seeds, etc. (d) small business training etc. They were found as 'social catalyts' to make small group members and all level community people aware, active and responsive. No doubt, CSP provided sessions have

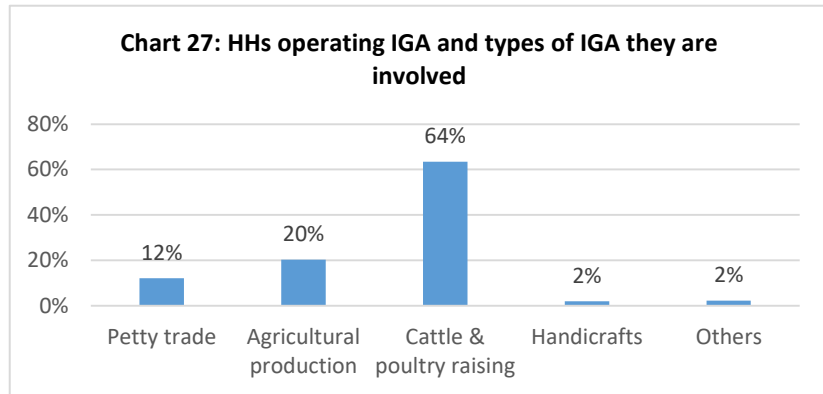




created impacts to develop the knowledge of the members but, at the same time, it was felt that the CSP have been repeating same lessons in the groups.

The service to the poultry and livestock by the Livestock Service Providers (LSP) has been found very effective. It was evident that LSP service helped reducing the mortality rate of poultry except Bakshiganj upazila. The livestock and poultry vaccination camps also

impacted greatly to aware all level community people regarding the diseases of poultry and livestock



During discussion with the CSP it was felt that each of them have a good income from the community particularly for LSP and the project as well. Specially, the LSP and ASP have been found self-employed in the community. The good income of the CSP will ensure their existence in the community and that will influence the small groups and PO / WC to be sustained as well.

As per statement of Dr. Abul Khayer Muhammed Anisur Rahman (ULO-Fulpur) no one from the SEEDs project has contacted him since he joined here on 08-09-2020. Although he had a previous idea about the project, he did not know that the project works in this Upazila. Others employees working in this office have given the similar answers.

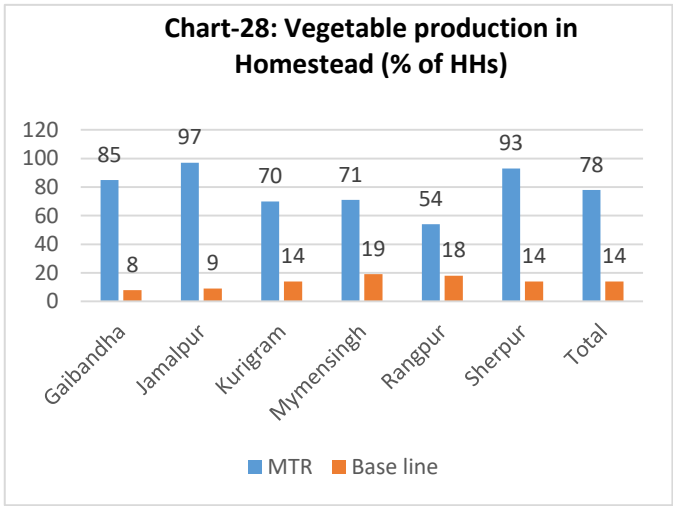
As per statement of Md. Masudur Rahman (UAO-Haluaghat), At the beginning of the project, in 2019 SEEDs project staffs has communicated, then about last two years the staff of SUS did not maintain any communications.

*The MTR team talk with Mr. Mofazzal-Livestock service provider. Mr. Lablu- Agriculture service Provider. In Bakshiganj, SRG members could not recall about the support they received from LSP and CSP. They took sessions, none of the participants could recall the learning. Beneficiaries reported that all chicken and ducks got died in Derur bill. So the effective utilization of LSP was not done.*

### 3.31. Vegetable production and Commercial Village:

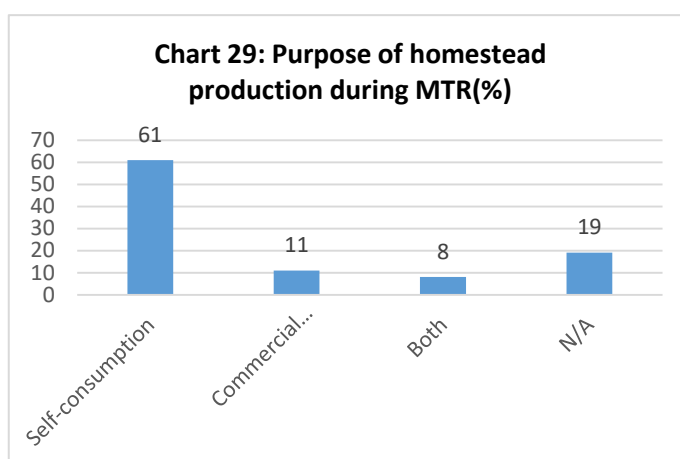
In rural Bangladesh context, homesteads are used for housing as well as for performing different on-

farm, off-farm and non-farm. The MTR study found a significant improvement in homestead level vegetable cultivation. It was found during baseline survey that only 14% BHHS were cultivating vegetables in their homestead which has been increased to 78%. However, in Rangpur district, more emphasis need to be given since vegetable cultivation is still less than all other district (only 54% BHHs). The MTR study also enquired about the purpose of vegetable cultivation since there is a major intervention of the programme is promoting commercial village. It is found that among vegetable cultivators (78%), 61% do cultivate for their consumption purpose and another 8% cultivates for both consumption and income purpose. However, 11% BHHs cultivates vegetables for commercial purpose mainly in Mymensingh (19%) Sherpur(18%) and Jamalpur districts (14%). Other 3 districts,



commercial cultivation is very less i.e. 9% in Gaibandha, 7% in Kurigram and 1% in Rangpur districts. Women are not going to market and not take lead in commercial farming.

The Product Sale and Marketing plan was developed as part of establishing the commercial village involving Paiker, aratdar, private companies. However, the implementation of commercial village is not done properly. All RRCs are not active. Covid -19 lockdown and recurrent flood in 3 districts also hampered the implementation of many activities particularly the commercial village. Linkage with distance whole sale market not achieved as well as RRCs. Some RRCs are not functioning.



In Derur Bill SRG of Bakshiganj to see commercial village. PSPM was done at SRG level. People cultivated vegetable from supplied seed distributed by US. They don't have commercial attitude and mainly consume the produces. There is doubt over there whether they cultivate in next season without seeds from US. Relevant staff acknowledge that they did not conceptualize the commercial

Cattle	Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	>5	Average
Goat	Frequency	181	138	38	33	16	7	413
	%	16.48	12.57	3.46	3.01	1.46	0.64	37.61
Sheep	Frequency	5	9	3		1		18
	%	0.46	0.82	0.27		0.09		1.64
Cow	Frequency	271	125	33	13	3	2	447
	%	24.68	11.38	3.01	1.18	0.27	0.2	40.71
Buffalo	Frequency	1	3			1		5
	%	0.09	0.27			0.09		0.46
Pig	Frequency	26	10	5			1	42
	%	2.37	0.91	0.46			0.09	3.83

village concept properly. No RRC observed in Bakshiganj.

In Ulipur Upazila project has linked up the small groups with the market actors and in Jhenaigati Upazila, project has established the formal linkage between aratdar and commercial vegetable producer. Caritas successfully utilized the market system for commercial vegetable cultivation in Jhenaigati. The collection hub was established 4-5 years ago. They did PSPM, but the area is commercial vegetable cultivation area. Farmers cultivate vegetables commercially in this area since a long period. Mainly male farmer decide about the variety and species, pesticide spray etc. Women can support him during harvesting. Male involvement in project processes was not found. Indiscriminate use of pesticides is observed. Project should work on safe vegetable production processes.

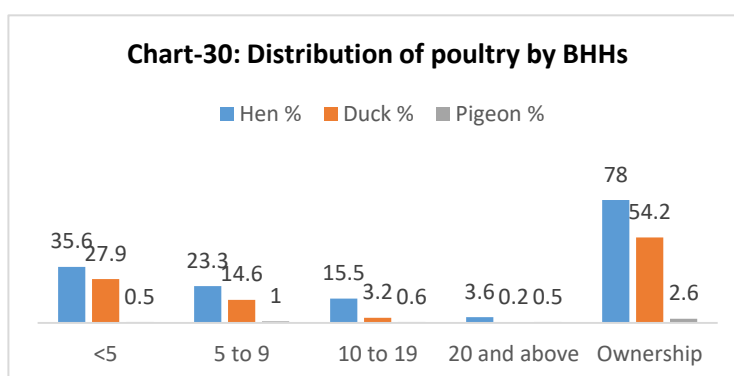
However, during the field observation, the MTR team observed that there should be more emphasis and training on commercial cultivation with good agricultural practices and involving male members of the households in the process since male takes decisions of target crop selection, spray and market aspects. Without their involvement, the commercial village concept cannot be implemented properly.

It is evident that income of BHHS has increased over last 3 years. The rearing trend of cattle and poultry is

	Goat		Sheep		Cow		Buffalo		Pig	
	Qty	BDT	Qty	BDT	Qty	BDT	Qty	BDT	Qty	BDT
Gaibandha	1.9	8188	5.0	12500	1.6	55501	3.0	11000	2.4	34000
Jamalpur	1.7	7424	1.5	4375	1.5	40942	2.0	7000	0	0
Kurigram	2.5	9520	2.0	5833	1.4	37815	0	0	0	0
Mymensingh	2.0	7929	0	0	1.5	45420	0	0	1.7	11000
Rangpur	1.9	6634	2.0	6000	1.7	47510	0	0	1.8	6245
Sherpur	2.0	7842	2.0	4950	1.7	49488	2.0	80000	1.3	15975
Average	2.0	7994	2.1	5594	1.6	46675	2.4	23200	1.6	14862

significantly improved as well income from on farm activities also increased. However, a planned commercial approach for marketing of the produces are in lack. In addition, Group based IGAs have a risk of internal quarrelling as the team observed in Haluaghat and Kurigram Sadar and Gaibandha Sadar as well.

**Cattle:** The midterm study revealed that there are 40.71% HHs (447) have cow (baseline 30% HHs, 339 nos.). Among the cow owner, 24.68% HHs have 1 cow or ox, 11.38% have 2, 3.01% have 3 cows, 1.18 have 4 0.27% have 5 and 0.2% have more than 5 cows or ox (Table- 8). The study revealed that a total of 701 cows possess by the respondents with an average 29763 BDT per cow.



Among the cow owner HH's on an average value of cows is 46675 BDT per HHs. Moreover, 37.61% HHs have goat (baseline 18.74%), 1.64% have sheep (baseline 2.5%) and 3.83% HHs have pig (baseline 5.10%). **The study clearly indicates that the BHHs is shifting from small animal to bigger and valuable cattle such cow/ox, buffalo and goat.** Moreover, 5 household is rearing 12 buffalo calves, the mean value per buffalo is 9666 taka (baseline 0%) and 1 household is rearing one horse, the estimated value is 15000 taka which was same during baseline.

**Poultry:** The midterm study revealed that 78% HHs are rearing hen (baseline 53%), 54.2% are rearing ducks (baseline 17%). Among them 35.6% households have less than 5 hens (baseline 68.74%), 27.9% have less than 5 ducks (baseline was 74.6% (Chart-30)).

Present mean value per hen, duck and pigeon is as mentioned by the respondents are 235.20, 321.71 and 237.03 Taka respectively. In terms of average value per HHs are 1570 Taka for hen, 1567 Taka for duck and 2616 Taka for pigeon as they reported (Table-9).

Name of district	Hen		Duck		Pigeon	
	Qty	BDT	Qty	BDT	Qty	BDT
Gaibandha	7.3	1397	4.6	1279	12.0	4067
Jamalpur	5.0	1215	3.1	1018	13.6	3080
Kurigram	9.0	2040	5.3	1794	9.3	2450
Mymensingh	6.2	1643	4.5	1533	12.4	2129
Rangpur	4.9	1210	3.4	1132	6.8	1250
Sherpur	6.8	1717	7.7	2393	11.6	3460
Average	6.7	1570	4.9	1567	11.0	2616

### 3.32. Other productive assets:

The MTR survey findings reveals that 1.5% HHs have motor bikes (baseline .98%) and 2.8% have easy bikes (Baseline 0.80%) respectively and mainly used for rental basis for income generation. In addition, 5.1 BHHs have Rickshaw or Van (Baseline 3.49%), 4.8% BHHs have sewing machine (baseline 2.24%) and .8% BHHs have boat (baseline .98%). The MTR study further shows that 7.3% BHHs (80

	Motor Cycle,	Auto, Easy-bike, Tomtom	Rickshaw/Van	Sewing Machine	Horse cart	Boat	Fishing Net	Shallow Tube Well
Frequency	16	31	56	53	6	9	80	20
Percent	1.5	2.8	5.1	4.8	0.5	0.8	7.3	1.8
Estimated present value(BDT)	28031	73742	26979	6945	2983	50500	5497	8894

households) have fishing net (baseline 3.8%) and 1,8% BHHs have shallow tube well (baseline 1%) for irrigation purpose (**Table-10**). This above equipment is used for income generation and other productive activities.

**In terms of livestock rearing, number of livestock per HHs and other productive assets, all are shown an increase trend compare with baseline situation.**

#### Timber Tree:

Timber Tree is considered as an important asset of a household. The MTR study further shows average 7 timbers are exists in BHHs which estimated value is 6874 BDT (Base line 4351 Taka). In addition, BHs have average 2 different agricultural tools

	Quantity (no.) of Timber, fruit Tree	Value(Taka) Timber, fruit Tree	Quantity (no.) of Agriculture equipment	Value(Taka) Agriculture equipment
Gaibandha	6.7	6664	1.7	933
Jamalpur	6.7	4713	2.0	350
Kurigram	5.0	5402	2.0	500
Mymensingh	9.0	10761	1.6	6480
Rangpur	3.3	4459		
Sherpur	10.5	8692	2.0	300
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>6874</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2682</b>

equivalent to 2682 Taka (baseline 548 taka). Please see **Table-11**.

**As a whole, it is estimated by that the mean productive asset value of the sampled HHs (those have ownership) during MTR period is 317998 BDT, which was 178540 Taka (78% increased) during the period of survey.**

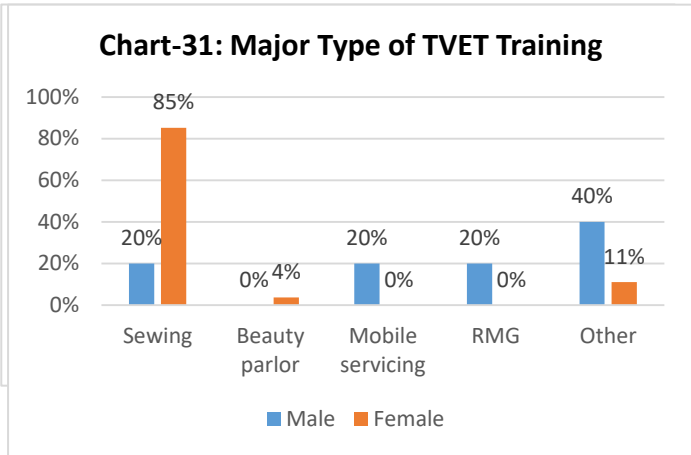
#### Youth and TVET training

Among the survey population, there were 279 eligible youth (age -20-24 years) for TVET training as per project criteria against base line figure of 249. Altogether, 30 different types of training and IGA opportunities have been created by the SEEDS project over last three years. A total of 1504 youth received such training and more than 90% are non-formal training since the formal TVET training Service providers (both Government and Non-Government) were closed due to Lock down for Covid-19 pandemic).

**Major training areas were:** (i) driving (ii) Computer; (iii) Welding, (iv) Motorcycle mechanic, (v) TV servicing; (vi) Electric and House wiring; (vii) Tailoring; (viii) Bi-cycle and Rickshaw and Van mechanic; (9) Carpentry, (x) Hair Cutting, (xi) Computer Graphics program; (xii) Mobile servicing; (xiii) Mason (Rajmistri); (xiv) Sweet Maker, (xv) Painting, (xvi) Beauty Parlor; (xviii) Refrigeration; (xxi) Hand Stitching, (xxii) Cooking, (xxiii) Jewelry works, (xxiv) Automobile servicing, (xxv) Mike operation; (xxvi) Pharmacy, (xxvii) RMG/Industrial Sewing Machine Operation, (xxviii) Mat making, (xxiv) Food Processing etc.

**Objectives-5:** By end of 2023, 4500 youths from marginalized families equipped with relevant Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) skills.

Out of 1504 trainees, 682 participants received training on Tailoring. However, the project staff faced challenge to matching the desire of participants and appropriate trade for the TVET participants feasible for job market feasibility.



The survey findings found that only 11.47%

(32 nos.) have received TVET training on different trade which was 12.7% (33 nos.) have received TVET

training during baseline. So there is no significant changes happened after imparting TVET training over last 3 years. Among them 15.6% are from male and 84.4% are from female (baseline figure was 5.7% male and 33% female). 84.4% women have mainly received training on Tailoring which has low potential of income. Among the training receivers, 18.8% are from ethnic minority community (30% in baseline) but none of them are with any disability. In the baseline study there were only 18.2% (6 persons) among the

**Tailoring Training is not a suitable IGA**

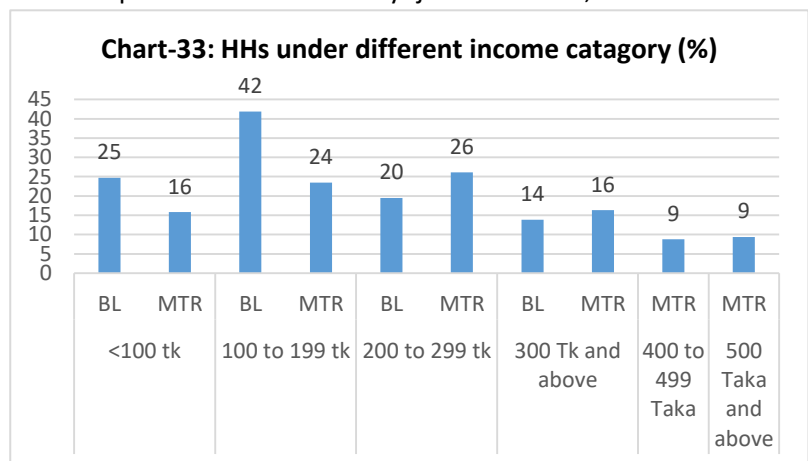
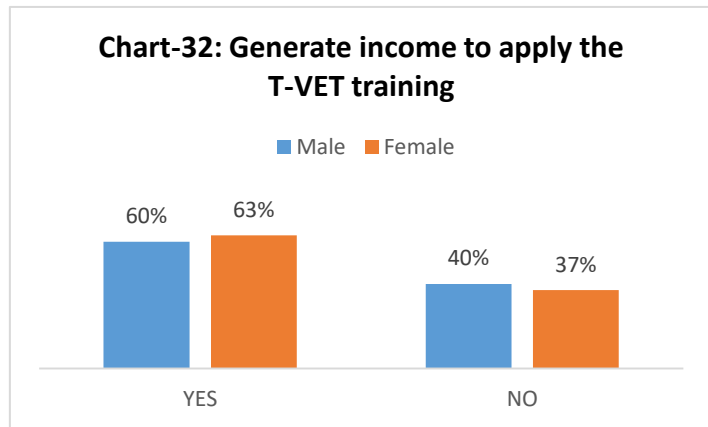
Kishamot Malbhanga village Mogolbasha Union, Kurigram village. We had a calculation of tailoring training with the villagers as follows: In the village, there are around 1000 households and 4000 people. On average each household do order tailoring of 3 pieces of ladies wear (3 piece, Blouse, Maxi, Petty coat etc.). So there are approximately 3000 order in a year i.e. monthly 250 order. There are 25 tailors in the village. They can get maximum 25 order per month. Which generate income only maximum 400 taka per month.

Similarly the MTR team met with 9 tailoring trainees in Gaibandha sadar and out of 9, only 1 participants said that she would take it as business. It is proved to them that learning tailoring is not a profitable business rather it a passion of girls. The tailoring and needle craft training should be stopped immediately.

vocational training receiver reported that they could able to generate income using the skill. On the other hand it was 62.5% (63% females and 60% males, (**Chart-32**) in the midterm study though the income proceeds is very poor. The survey data revealed that so far 62.5% of the trainees started to earn income.

**One of the tailoring training participants of Haluaghat bought sewing machine by taking loan from local money lender. For five months, she took, 5000 taka loan and paid interest 2500 taka. Local staff did not know about this. This mohajoni loan make her vulnerable and fall her in poverty trap .**

It was also found that there is no preset criteria of selecting an ostad (Non formal trainer). Sometimes Ostad found do not obey the rules or procedures of government as well as the safety aspects such for driving training. Moreover, MTR team found trainees with less than eighteen years as TVET participants which is a violation of child rights. Thus the Team suggests to set a clear Standard Operating Procedures about the age of the TVET participants (14 + or 18+) as well as setting the quality and attributes of non-formal trainer (ostad). If it is already exist, then it necessary to monitor the selection in a timely manner. As per Youth policy, engagement of 14 years aged children is permitted in non-risky job. However, there are 3-4 participants from one village on same trade that obviously distort the employment market. The team has observed a Industrial sewing Machine Operation (ISMO) training was continuing. For 14 young lady. Out of 14, only 5 participants said that they would go job and 1 will do business. Others are mainly received the as an added skill.



There should be guide about the criteria and guidelines, safety measures etc. Trainer should also be respectful to las of the country. We interacted with trainers who is not formally providing driving training. Who is not a qualified trainer and no respect to rules? Getting training from such a trainers may jeopardized the whole TVET training aspects on driving.

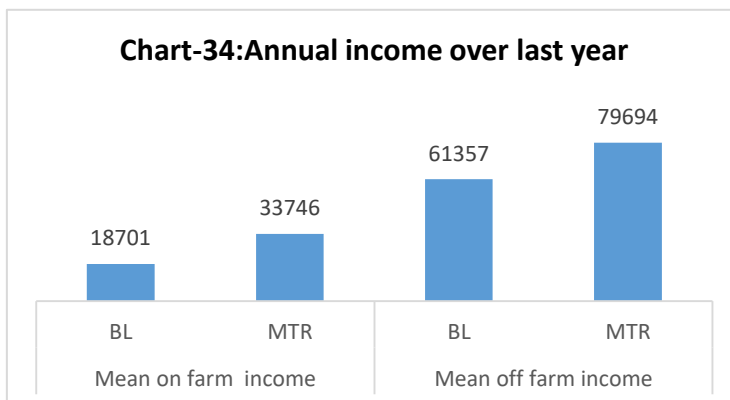
Ms. Sumita Tigga, HSC pass, her father has 1 acre of land by own and leased in another 1 acre for maize cultivation. Comparatively better off family in their village. Her father wish to educate Sumita and her sister up to post graduate level. She is studying in under graduate level. She want to do some income alongside education. She was selected for hand stitching training and received training for the period of April to May 2021. She received 2 hours training every day from a nearby trainers. It was a non-formal training. She could learn 4 types of craft design. She received 45 taka per day for 60 days (Average 2700 Taka). The Ostad-Ms. Surovi got 30 Taka x 60 Days=1800 taka. She also do daily wage labor in season and could save 2100 taka and take 6000 taka from her father. So far within last 8 months she earned order for 10 clothing /one piece. From each one piece, she spent 260 taka depending on cloth quality and could sell 500 taka. For other type clothing, she could earn 275 taka by spending 425 taka. She normally can get order maximum 2-3 clothing. So far she could make profit of 2000 taka over last eight months which give monthly around 300 taka.

When an institution is involved with training, it should be handled professionally. We did not found training module or schedule for TVET particularly for Ostad-Shishya model. Few NGOs started to develop modules and schedules after 3<sup>rd</sup> year of implementation. Later we met the; participants of



TVET training in Gidari union. Out of 9 tailoring participants, only 1 is planned for business and other learned it as additional skill. It is a misuse of resource.

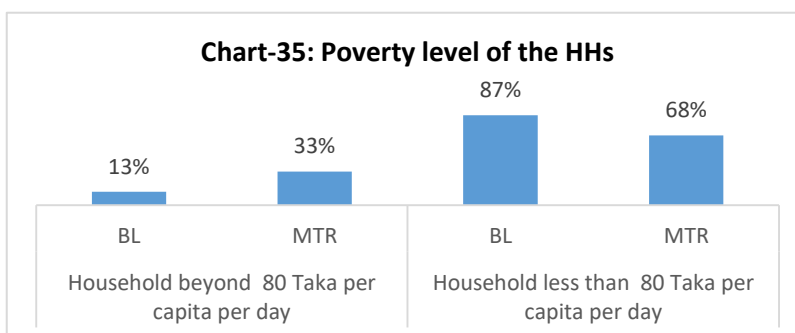
**Income and Expenditure:** The MTR study tried to capture the last one-year income and expenditure ahead of the survey date. Considering the income pattern, it is found that Non-agriculture income including labour selling is the major source of income 79694 Taka (baseline was 61357 Taka) whereas the income from agriculture farming during MTR study is 33746 Taka against baseline figure of 18701 Taka.



In both cases, income has increased by 29% and 80% respectively. Average Yearly income stands at 98172 Taka against the baseline figure of 68704 Taka (increased by 70%). Average yearly expenditure is increased to 83514 Taka against the baseline figure of 64386 Taka (77%). The study also tried to analyze the income category of households and found that around

15% BHHS earn less than 100 taka per day (baseline 25%) whereas around 23.5% are earning in between 100-200 taka (baseline 42%). Around 26% are earning 200-299 taka (baseline 19.5%) and during baseline period 13.8% were earning 300 Taka and above which now enhanced to 34.5. **(Chart-34)**. The households' poverty level within a threshold of 80 taka per capita per day has been increased by 20% **(Chart-35)**.

The average per capita per day income is found as 66.5 taka during MTR (base line 51.5 taka). It is also found that around 32.5% BHHS go beyond 80 taka per capita and per day income that was only 13% HHs during baseline survey . Considering the income pattern, it is found that BHHS are given more emphasis on making the homestead as a more productive resource. They are earning very good income from homestead agriculture and, cattle and poultry i.e. 13150, 22129 and 2274 respectively which is significantly better than the base line situation. District specific on-farm income situation is mentioned in **Chart 37 and 38**. Considering the income pattern, it is found that BHHS are given more emphasis on making the homestead as a more productive resource. It is also found that almost 75% BHHS (baseline (19.5% HHs) are operating different IGAs mainly homestead based i. e. cattle & poultry (63.5%), agriculture (20%) and petty trade (12%) etc. which resulted in better income position during MTR period **(Chart-36)**.



The income from off-farm sources are reduced in most of the traditional sources but increased in the area of in-country remittance which indicates a good mobility of people for income purpose in other part of the country. Moreover, income from skill selling and driving is also increased than baseline though the number of engaged people is very low.

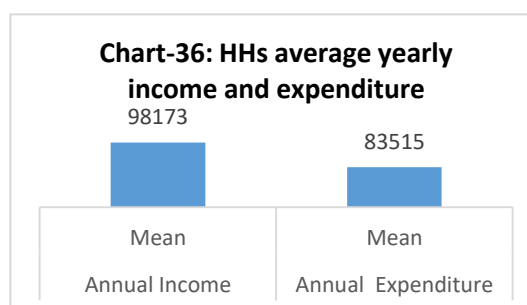
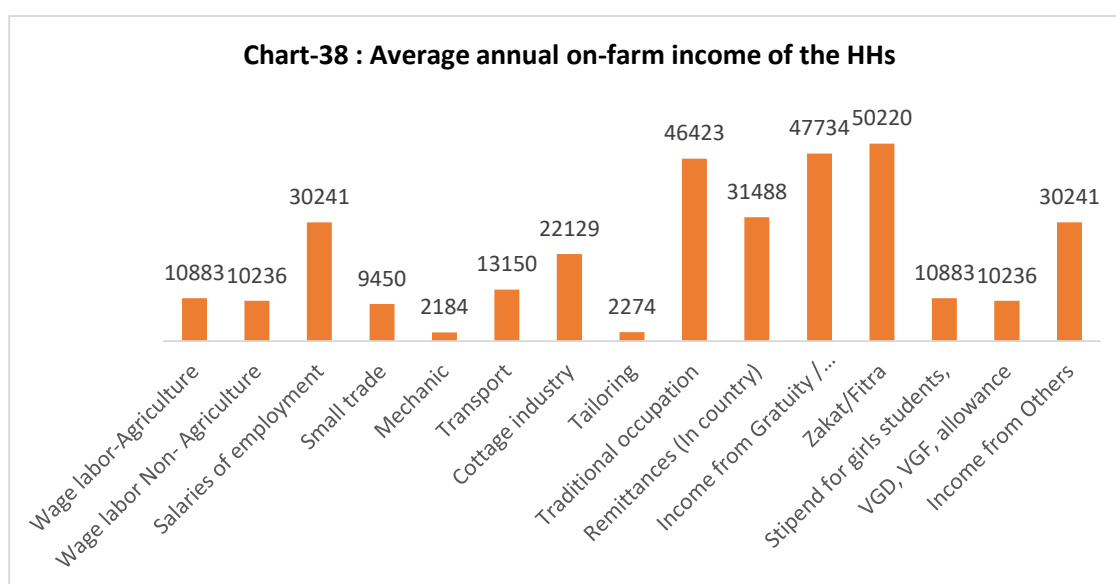
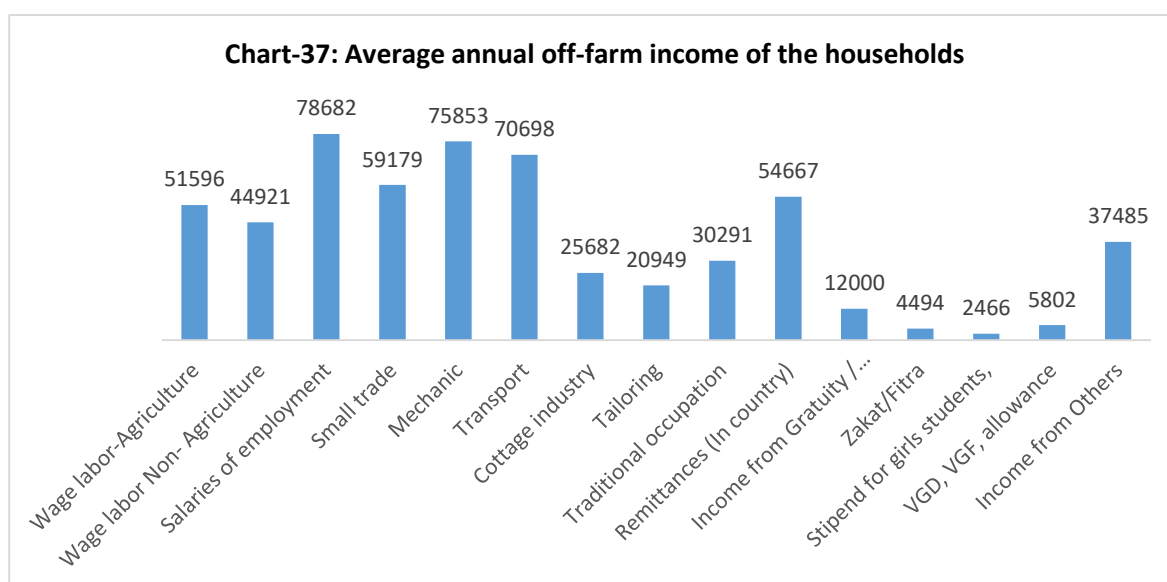


Table-12: Mean Income from different sources and HHs involved over last 01 year											
Aus		Aman		Boro		Jute		Ground Nut		Homestead	
BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR
11331	10883	9618	10236	11847	30241	9969	9450	5020	2184	2081	13150
Cattle		poultry		Capture fish		Culture fish		Agri. tools		Others	
15295	22129	1287	2274	24547	46423	10083	31488	12500	47734	22015	50220
agri. day labour		Non-Ag. day labour		salary		business		skill sale		driver	
44027	51596	40212	44921	87366	78682	62274	59179	41519	75853	56969	70698
Cottage Industry		tailoring		Traditional skill		in country Remittance		Foreign remittance		Pension	
12933	25682	22074	20949	34460	30291	22701	54667	10500		12300	12000
jakat/fetra		stipend		Social safety net		others					
5885	4494	1841	2466	4130	5802	26211	37485				





**Expenditure:** The MTR study categorized the livelihood expenses food item and non-food item. The study revealed that the food related expenditure is around 54811 Taka against the baseline value of 33680 taka including edible oil, spices and fuel wood for cooking. This might happen for increase price of the items as well as the better affordability of BHHs.

Food		Medical		Cloth		House repairing		Education		Cosmetics	
BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR	BL	MTR
29111	47511	6291	3509	3747	3646	5162	5568	5014	3449	1903	1997
Mobile phone bill		Electric bill		TV bill		Gift		Donation		Loan interest	
1699	1766	1577	2046	1480	1381	2272	2218	549	815	2740	5964
Tax		transport		Poultry rearing		Livestock rearing		Ag. investment		Land lease/purchase	
172	210	1864	2439	6464	5118	2209	2698	10672	6841	7248	10463
fish culture		Oil-spices		cooking Fuel		Furniture purchase		Betel Nut-Leaf		others	
<b>3171</b>	<b>5088</b>	<b>3502</b>	<b>5195</b>	<b>1067</b>	<b>2105</b>	<b>1203</b>	<b>4869</b>	<b>3820</b>	<b>2682</b>	<b>15616</b>	<b>1000</b>

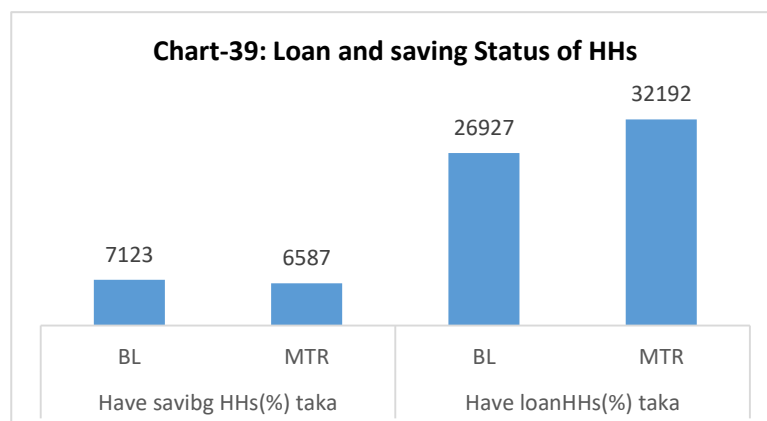
The non-food item expenditure is almost double of food related expenses which is a reflection of present consumerism based economic system. The major expenditure area for non- food item is payment of loan interest 5964 Taka (baseline 2740 BDT.), education cost reduced to 3449 taka from 5040 mainly because of longtime closing of schooling activities due to lock down period, treatment cost is reduced from 6291 taka to 3509 taka due to better hygiene practices and less opportunity to go to Doctor due to lock down period and cell phone bill is slightly increased from 1699 taka to 1766 taka (**Table-13**). Analyzing the income trend, it is revealed that the major expenditure areas are inevitable. The agriculture, poultry and fish farming expenditure is also kind of productive investment which reflected in better income position.

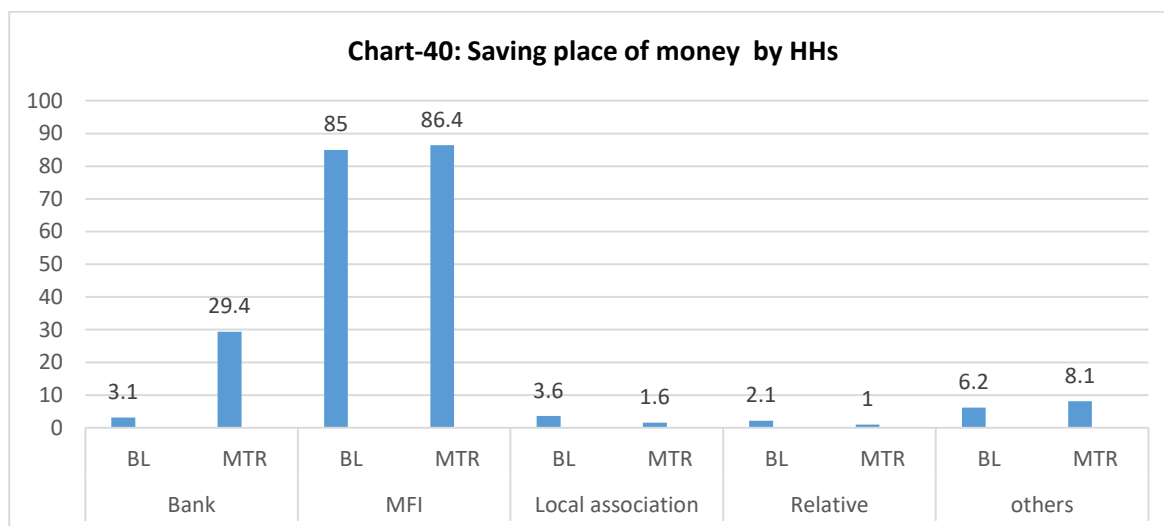
However, the expenditure is not made in all HHs. From this analysis, it is difficult to conclude whether the targeted BHHs are in deficit comparing with income or not. In simple ways, it can be mentioned that they are in surplus situation of 14658 BDT (Table 35) though they (39% BHHs) have outstanding loan of 32192 taka and a savings of 6587 taka in 62% BHHs.

### 3.33. Loan and savings

**Loan status:** The study revealed that 39.7% BHHs (baseline 38.7) have presently taken average loan of BDT. 32192 which was 26927 BDT during baseline period. It is slightly increased. The major source of loan is micro Finance Institutions (MFI) and similarly the major saving place is also the MFIs (75.5%). The average savings amount is 6587 Taka that is lower from baseline findings (7123 Taka).

Regarding savings it is found that 85% BHHs (multiple) are saving in MFIs and around 29% are saving in local bank amounting to 7024 Taka. However, the POs or ward committee have opened bank account and MTR team did not find any transaction of that account also. Among the respondents' households, only 2.8% households have savings in bank(**Chart-39 and 40**).





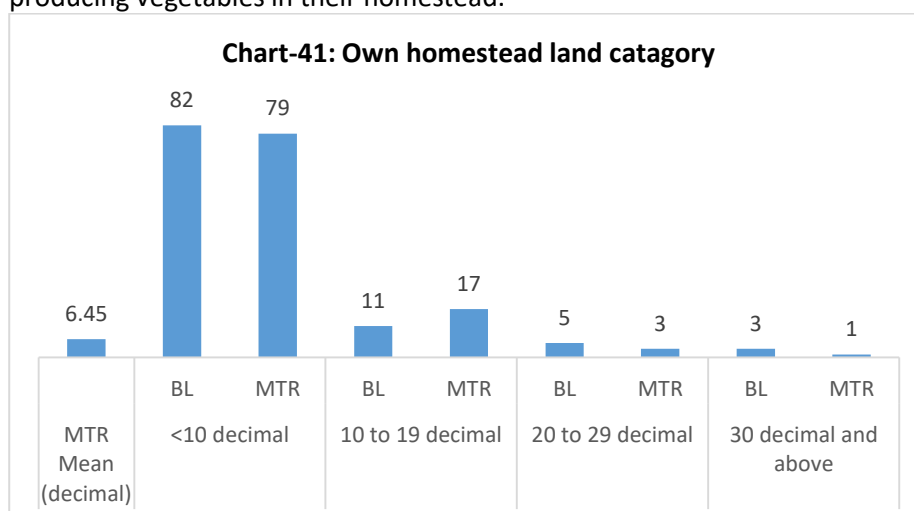
### 3.34. Property and assets

#### Homestead Land and ownership:

The baseline study finding shows that the 58.8% respondents have average 6.41 decimals (average value 964410 Taka). The midterm study found the improvement of housing ownership, 82.6% households (average 6.42 decimal, worth 124818 BDT,) reported as self-housing, that was 58.8% in baseline. The reason for this improvement since the overall income situation has been decreased during MTR. The other reason could be the change of BHHs after baseline period which indicated a comparatively better off household selection. Whereas sheltered people reduced from 41% to 17.4% Embankment, lease land or as sheltered. It is also found that less homestead land holding in Gaibandha district (4.83 decimal) and maximum in Sherpur district 11.74 decimal (**Table- 14 and Chart-41**). It is also found that only producing vegetables in their homestead.

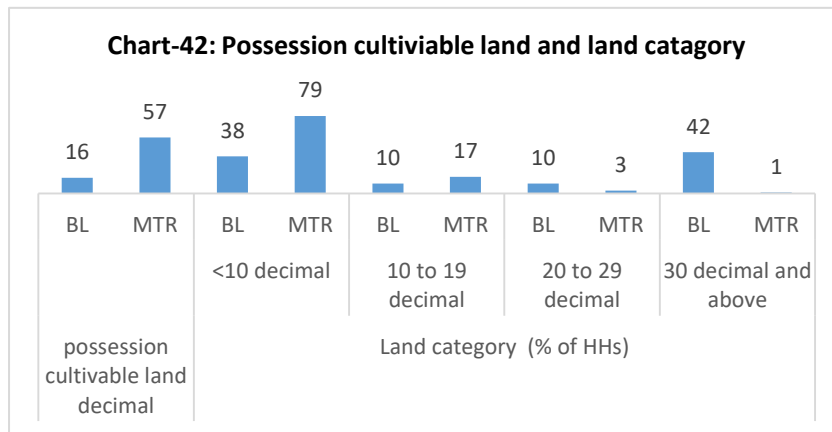
**Table-14: Ownership of homestead land**

	Own House		Average Value (Taka)	
	BL	MTR	BL	MTR
Gaibandha	58.5%	86.6%	83455	101579
Kurigram	53.0%	78.1%	67908	88993
Sherpur	44.6%	77.2%	198700	175808
Mymensingh	80.8%	92.3%	79966	139635
Jamalpur	53.6%	80.2%	71282	111365
Rangpur	62.9%	81.2%	103381	141762
Average	58.8%	82.6%	96410	124818



**Cultivable Land:** Maximum possession is found in Sherpur district (140 decimal) followed by in Gaibandha (60 decimal). Beneficiaries of Mymensingh have less access to cultivable land i.e. only

average 4 decimal per HHs. However, 79% BHHS have access to less than 10 less than 10 decimal of land that was 38% BHHS in baseline findings. Therefore, it is evident that possession on cultivable land has been increased. Some improvement observed



regarding the possession of cultivable land. There are 186 (16.9%) HHs reported that they have own cultivable land, in baseline it was 9.9% (110 HHs) only (**Chart-42**).

### Housing

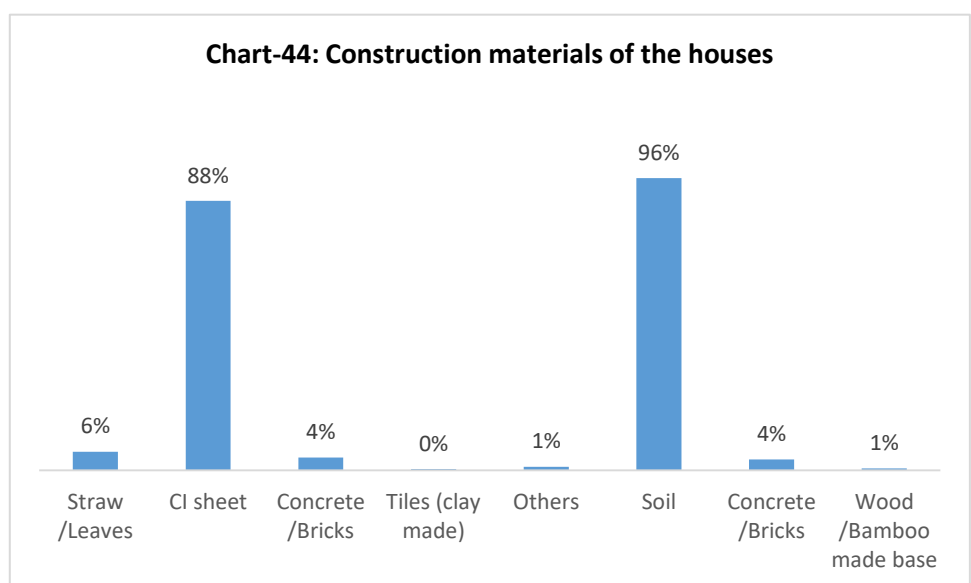
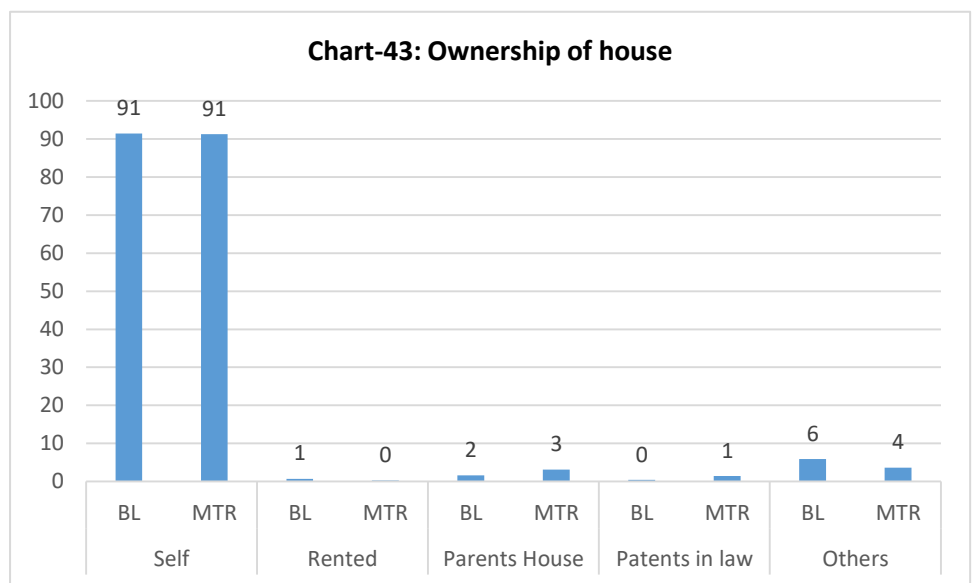
mud made wall 11% against 19% houses during baseline(**Chart-43**). Brick made wall found 2.1% during MTR which was 1% during baseline.

### 3.35. Other goods, services and commodities of households

**Mobile phone, TV and refrigerator:** The MTR study shows that 93.6% BHHS have at least one mobile phone set (baseline 73.36%). It is also found that 15.3% BHHS have at least one Television (baseline 10%) and 2.4% BHHS have one refrigerator (baseline 1%).

**Chair, table, Cot, etc.:** The study further shows that almost 92.3% BHHS have cot (baseline 96.95%) and 85%HHs are with table and chair(Baseline 68.16%). 5.1% BHHS have Almirah (baseline 11.30%) and

66.6% BHHS have Trank (Steel Box) to preserve their cloths and other belongings (Baseline 49.60%).



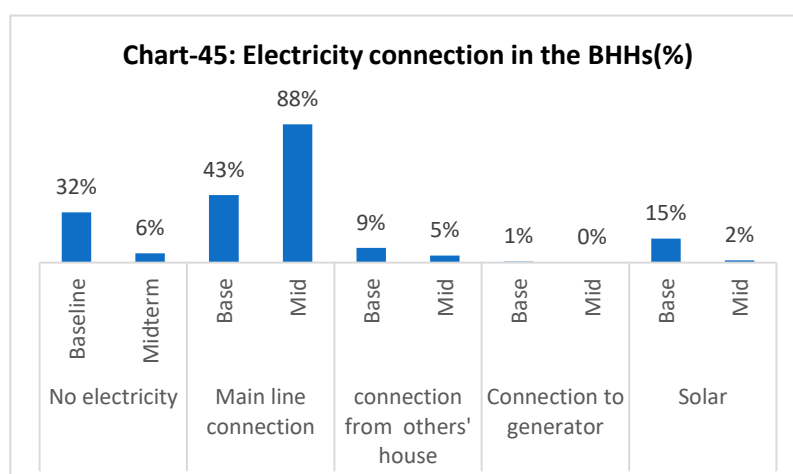
Only 10% BHHs have dressing table (Base line 17.49%) and 28.6% have show-case (Baseline 17.49%) in their home. Moreover, 87% HHs have at least one electric fan (Baseline 29.33%), 71% have one tube well and 17.40% HHs have bi cycles which is same to baseline findings (**Chart-44**).

Household items	Qty	Percent	Mean value
Mobile Phone set	1028	93.6%	2243
TV	168	15.3%	6941
Refrigerator	26	2.4%	17950
Cot/Khat	1014	92.3%	3441
Chair-Table	935	85.2%	1330
Almirah (steel/wooden))	56	5.1%	4725
Trank/Still box	731	66.6%	2563
Dressing Table	112	10.2%	3578
Show case	314	28.6%	5131
Electric/Solar Fan	957	87.2%	1396
Tube-well	782	71.2%	3764
Bi-Cycle	191	17.4%	3184
Silver Jewelry	204	18.6%	1660
Gold Jewelry	522	47.5%	6400

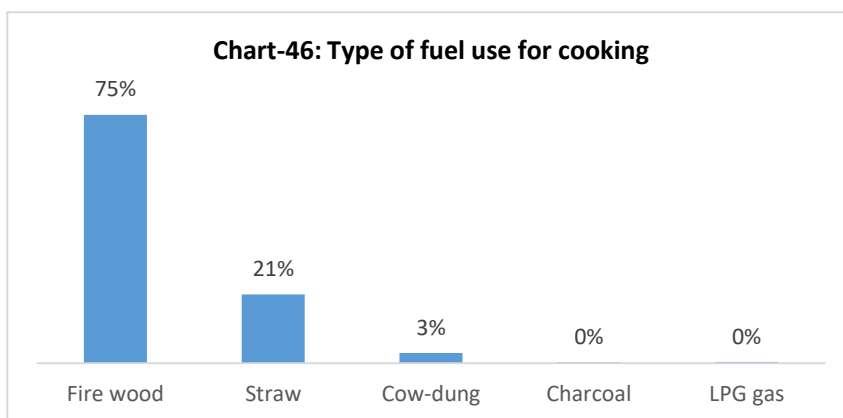
**Ornaments and jewelry:** Ornaments are the costly things and particularly women feel proud if they have ornaments whether it is made by gold or silver. The ornaments are also essentials for marriage ceremony. Generally people want to avail it after fulfilling the basic need as luxury item. The baseline study found that more than 18.6% women have silver ornaments (base line 9.9%) and 48% women have gold made ornaments (Baseline 47.5%) though the amount is very negligible (**Table-16**).

### 3.36. Electricity

The baseline study findings revealed that still 6% BHHs are out of electricity service against 31.8% households are out of the service of electricity thus 94% BHHs have now access to electricity services. Among user, 87.6% are using from government electricity services which is a remarkable improvement compared with baseline (42.8%) and 4.6% have taken line from neighbors. Moreover, 1.5% BHHs are using solar service, which was 15% during base line services (**Chart-45**).

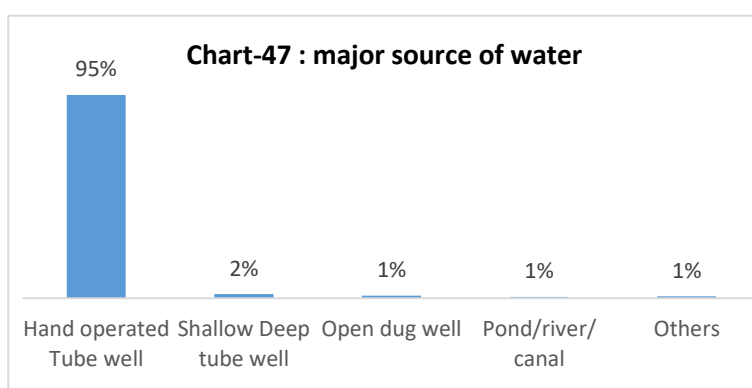


**Cooking fuel:** The MTR findings shows that 75% BHHs are using firewood (baseline study 50.4%), 21% are using straw (Base line 48.4%), 3% are using cow dung (baseline 1%) and only .4% are using LPG gas mainly in Gaibandha and Rangpur district(**Chart-46**).

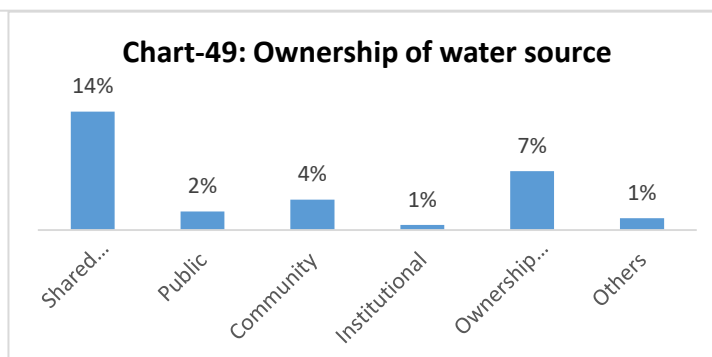
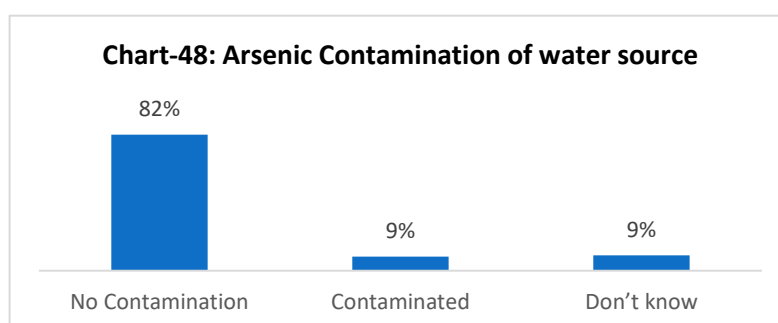


### 3.37. Water and sanitation

**Safe Drinking water:** The MTR study found that 95.4% of BHHs are using safe water drinking water from hand operated tube well (base line 86.5%) and 1% are using deep tube well water (base line 9.6%) supplied by pipeline, 1.2% are using water from dug well (base line 3.6%). Please see **Chart-47**. Overall it is an improvement in all aspects of accessing to safe water. Presently 71% BHHS have their own tube well against 45% during base line and 14% have shared ownership (base line 16.9%). Remaining 15% BHHs are collect water from different sources such as government, community and institutional sources (baseline 34.6%).



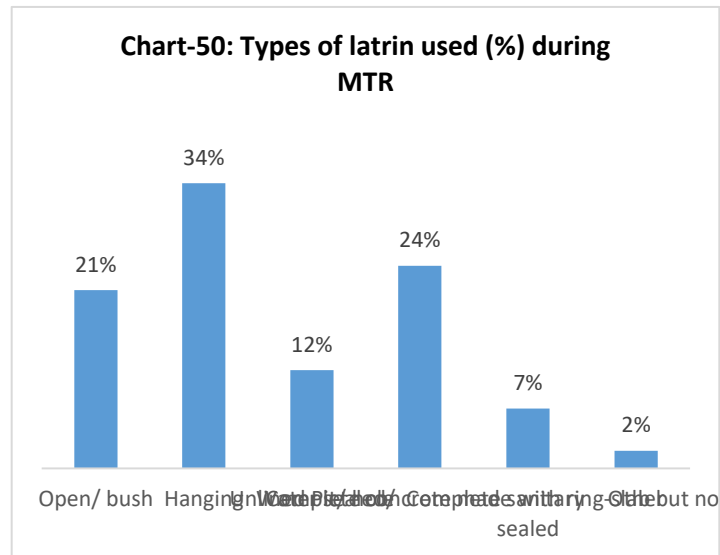
In addition, 100% respondents mentioned that they need maximum 3 minutes to collect water where as 1.7% HHs reported during baseline period that they needed more than 30 minutes to collect water. Regarding the quality of water, 5.9 HHs mentioned that there is arsenic in their water, 82% said that there is arsenic free (baseline 59%) and 9.4% user mentioned that they do not know the arsenic issues in their water (**baseline 34.5**). 8.5% user still compel to use arsenic contaminated water (**Chart-48**).



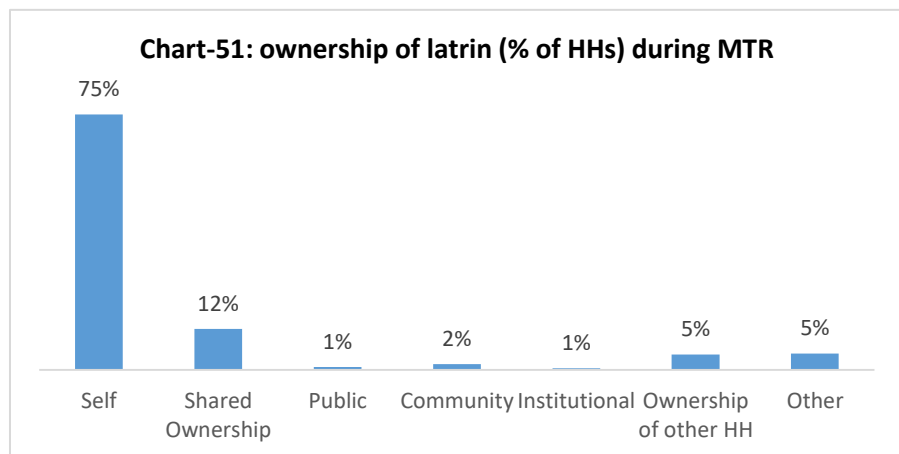
**Sanitation:** The MTR study reveals that the sanitation issue is still a concern for SEEDS beneficiaries.

Still 2.73% are using open places (base line 19.5%), 34% in hanging latrine, 11.7% in unlined pit and 7% in latrines without water seal (Chart-50). Therefore, only 24% BHHs are using water sealed sanitary latrines. During field visit, MTR team found that the issue is very serious in Jamalpur and Kurigram district. In addition, hygiene and sanitation aspects at Households and its premises is very bad in Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Kurigram district.

The study further exposed that 75.4% are using their own latrine (baseline 55%), 12% are using joint ownership latrine (base line 18.3%) and remaining 13% are using government, joint or NGO provided latrines (baseline 27%) (Chart-50). The staff are



regularly conducting the court yard sessions on primary health care including neonatal and pregnant mothers' health care, water, sanitation and hygiene as well as providing the referral services to hospitals and clinics. Though the situation of



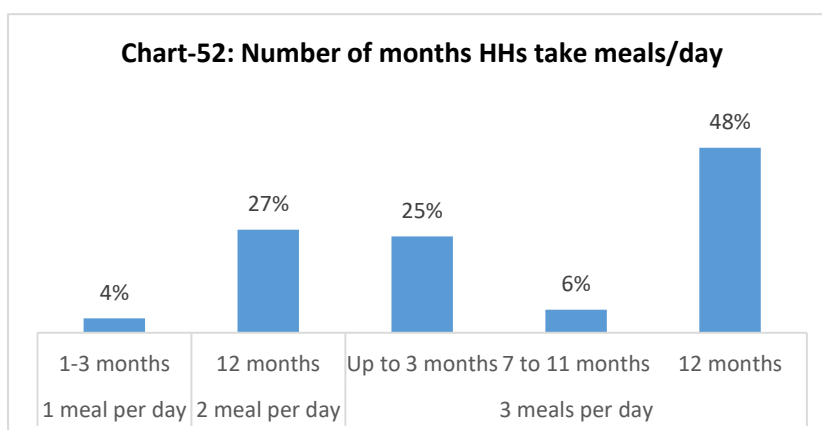
hygiene and sanitation is quite unsatisfactory in Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Kurigram areas where the MTR team visited.

### 3.38. Food Security, Health and Nutrition

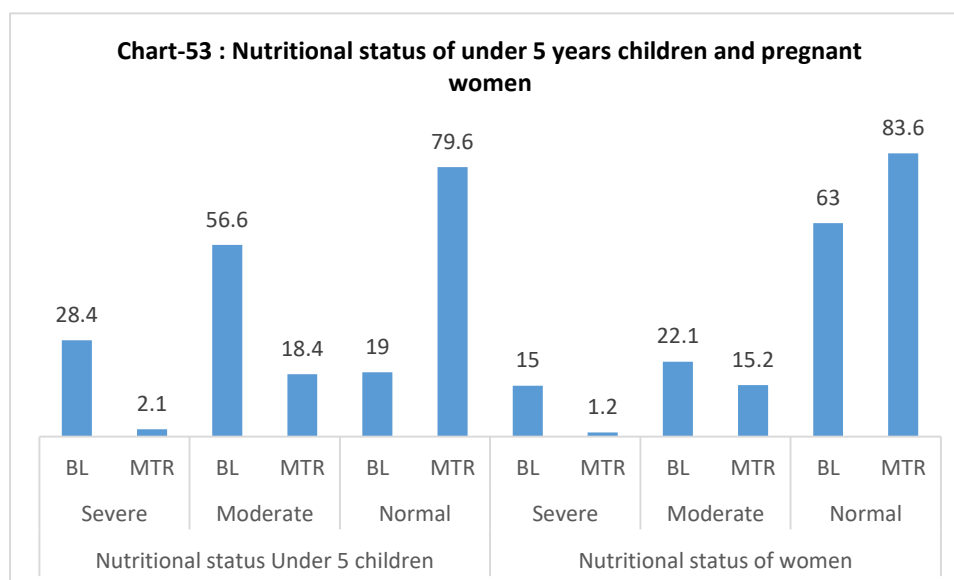
#### Food Consumption

The midterm data revealed that 48.4% HHs (baseline 64.5 HHs) are now taking three meals every day for the whole year. Jamalpur (28%), Sherpur (31%) and Mymensingh district (31.5%) are the most vulnerable and Kurigram (86.3%) shows the best performance regarding the year round consume of 3 meals per day. The midterm study also revealed that 27% households are taking 2 meals generally by habit as they are going for work in the morning and after returning from work, they cook in the evening. Even 3.8% households reported to able to manage only 1 meal per day during the whole year. (Chart-52).

**Nutrition:** The study also captured data about the nutritional status of the children and pregnant mother. It is to be noted that the Data enumerator used their previous working experience as most of them did nutritional survey, apply visual observation and discussion with parent to identify malnutrition among (Average 589 children) and pregnant mothers with following criteria:



- Distended abdomen
- Thin size of Arm
- Loss of appetite
- Frequent illness
- Weakness
- Pale eye
- Swelling face (Moon)/
- Edema
- Anemia
- Hair loss/reddish hair



The study observed that 2.1% children are still severely malnourished (baseline 28.4%). In addition, among pregnant mother, 1.2% are still malnourished against the baseline of 22%. (Chart-53). In addition, 2.9% HHs reported that there was death of below 5 years during 2014-2019 children in their family over last 5 years which has been increased to 3.5%, a bit higher mortality rate for the period (2017-2021 ) period. (Table-17).

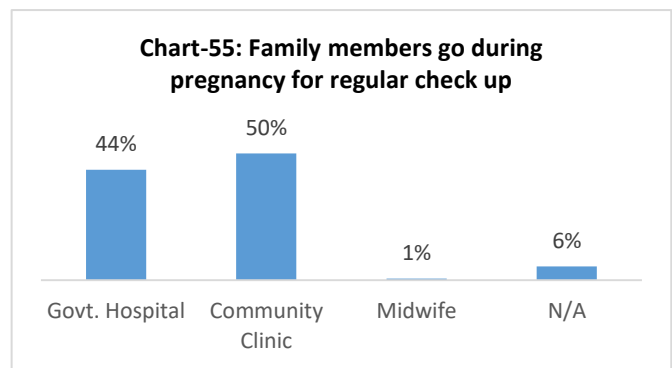
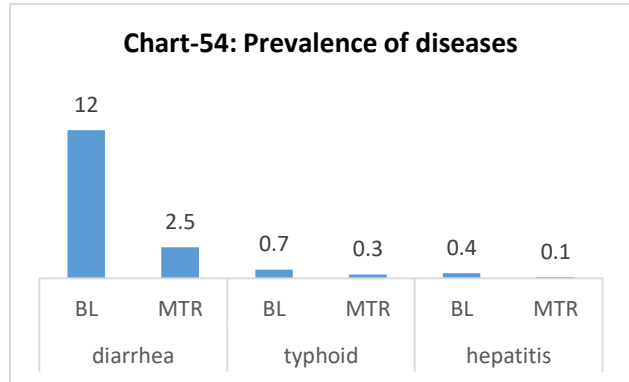
**Table-17: Death of children in sampled HHs over last 5 years**

	yes	
	Base line	MTR
Gaibandha	2.1	3.8
Kurigram	3.8	0.5
Sherpur	1.6	4.4%
Mymensingh	2.7	6.6%
Jamalpur	4.4	3.3%
Rangpur	2.7	2.2%
Average	2.9	3.5%

### 3.39. Water borne and hygiene related Diseases

The other diseases suffered by under 5 years` children has significantly reduced i.e. from 12% (baseline) to 2.5% (MTR). Similarly Typhoid and Hepatitis have also been reduced though the occurrence is very low. It indicates a better behavioral change on hygiene issues among the parent and children(Chart-54).

In the surveyed households, it is found that around 44% pregnant women go to government hospital and another 50% to community clinic for their Ante-natal and post-natal checkup (Chart-55). Obviously it is great change in rural Bangladesh context.





## CHAPTER Four: Cross Cutting Issues and Covid-19 Impact

### 3.40. Cross Cutting Issues

#### 3.41.1. Inclusion of Vulnerable Community

In regards to inclusion of extremely vulnerable people into the project activities, the survey data revealed that 2.3% person with disabilities the project sites (**Table-10**). There is one Focal person in each POs, who has received training on handling disability issues. The activities are mainly limited to advocate for disability allowance for them. In regards to their engagement in economic activities, there is a lack of deliberated interventions in order to bring this people in the economic activities.

#### 3.41.2. Disaster Risk management and climate change adaptation

##### DRR and Climate Change

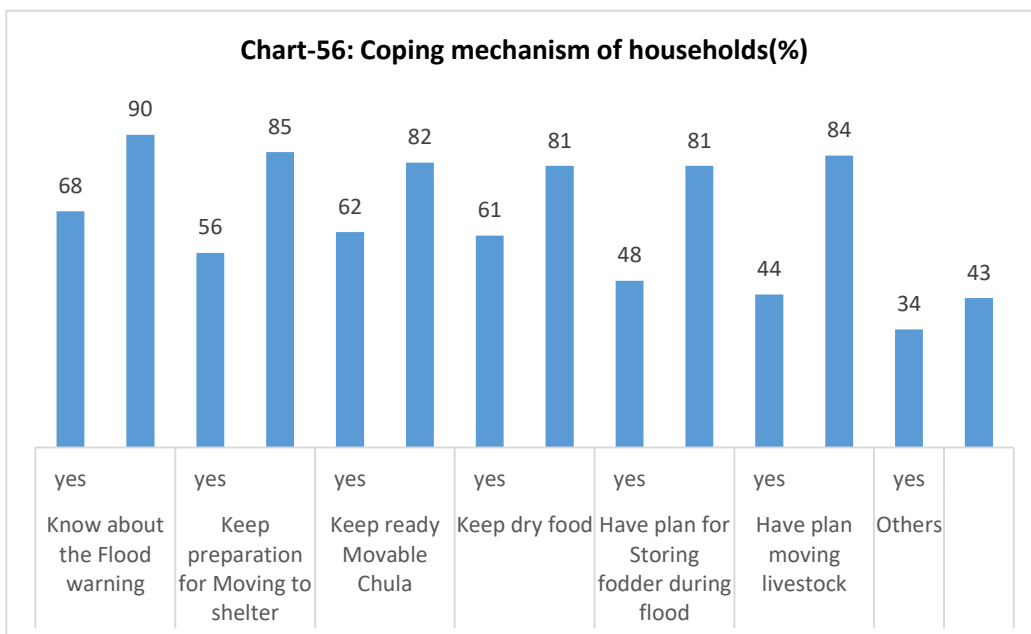
During MTR period, since election of Union Parishad was on going, there was no Union Disaster Management Committee and they team could not check the relation of focal person with UDMC.

The focal persons have provided awareness lessons to the small group members which created impacts to develop the knowledge of members. It has been recommended to organize mock drills and cultural events among maximum schools and colleges located in the working Unions of working Upazilas.

The study also collected data about the vulnerability of houses from different risks. It is revealed that flood risk is mentioned by majority of households (60% in Gaibandha, around 70% in Kurigram and Jamalpur) since the working areas are situated by the bank of the river Brahmaputra/Teesta and Korotoa (**Table-18**). The study further revealed that still 60%-65% Households of these 3 districts remain under river erosion risk.

	Flood protected		Out of river erosion risk	
Gaibandha	43	41	69	57
Kurigram	24	31	67	52
Sherpur	77	87	81	77
Mymensingh	63	72	82	64
Jamalpur	47	31	62	40
Rangpur	83	89	0.0	90
Average				

It is also found that almost 90% BHHs are now aware of flood warning (baseline 67.5 HHs) and almost 80% has plan to adopt different potential strategies to cope with disaster risks. On the other



hand, 70% HH have remained with soil made floor at both the project sites. In regards to wall, the

improvement also indicated that majority of the HH made their house wall by CI Sheet. For accessibility of housing structures for elderly and persons with disabilities, about 30% houses need to be accessible. The latrines and tube wells are not feasible for physical disability. Placing a Vertical bar and sidebar can resolve the problem.

Though SEEDS developed focal person on climate change and DRR, however, it appeared clearly from the discussions that knowledge gaps remained extremely high, in particular in the area of climate change among the SRG members. Knowledge levels of community people on climate change were also found to be partial and incomplete and no member was able, for example, to define climate change or mention causes of climate change and how to cope with climate change. DRR focal has point participated in training and share the issues in SRG meetings but upon discussion with the participants, it was observed they have been fallen on difficulty to recall the message of these programmes and materials. In addition, during the observation and discussion during field visit it has been revealed that SRG members did not have knowledge on accessible warning system, evacuation techniques of persons with disabilities, old aged and pregnant women etc.

There is no significant improvement to cope with flood by raising the homestead plinth above the highest flood water level. There is need of adapting climate resilient production technologies both technical and applied method. They have continued vegetables cultivation in using traditional varieties.

### 3.41.3. Gender, dignity and Women Empowerment,

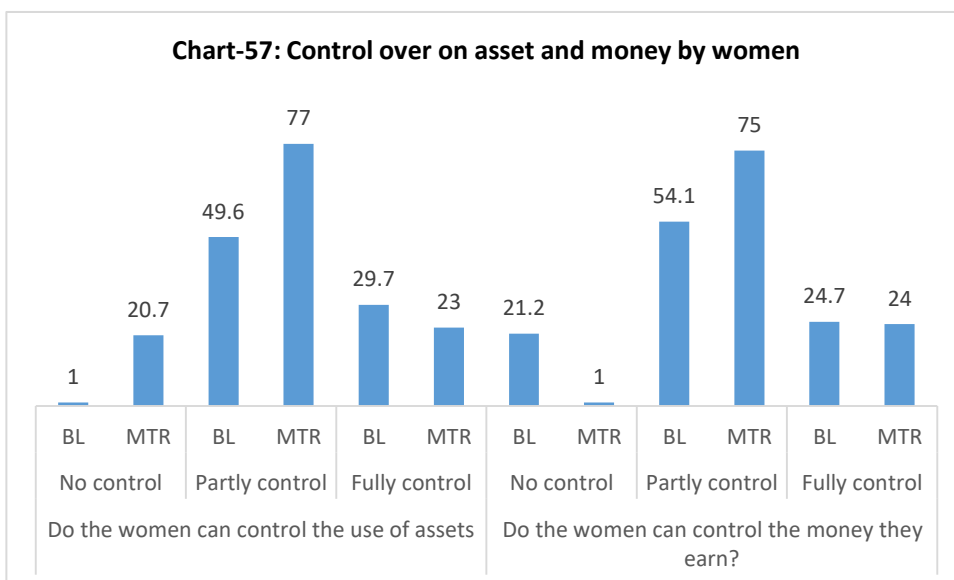
This section discusses the comparison between baseline situation and with MTR progress on condition and position of women, their control over resources, decision making ability, and violence against women, early marriage and mobility related issues of the project area. The baseline study considers the ownership on productive and valuable asset as an important area which can enhance women position in the household and society. The MTR team observed that 100% target people of the project were female though there are few male in advisory body of the union committees. All most all women participants informed the review team about their better family and social standing as compared to previous. They feel that they are now more honored and respected as an important and viable contributor to the family economy and as skilled and knowledgeable member of the community they live in. As a result, the importance of the female members increased and opened scope to participate in the decision making process. However, the president and secretary are found vocal in most of the cases. Thus alternative leadership development process is an option.

	% Female member
Gaibandha	76%
Jamalpur	100%
Kurigram	60%
Mymensingh	70%
Rangpur	50%
Sherpur	100%
Average	76%

**Women involvement with earning:** The MTR study found a significant improvement of women involvement with income generating activities. The baseline study found that almost 28% women (2<sup>nd</sup> member) of targeted HHs are involved with petty income generating activities which is now enhanced to 76% during MTR survey (**Table-19**). The findings also reflect in the productive assets i.e. cattle (68%) and poultry rearing (54%). The homestead-based income generating activities have increased a lot which is mainly run by the women.

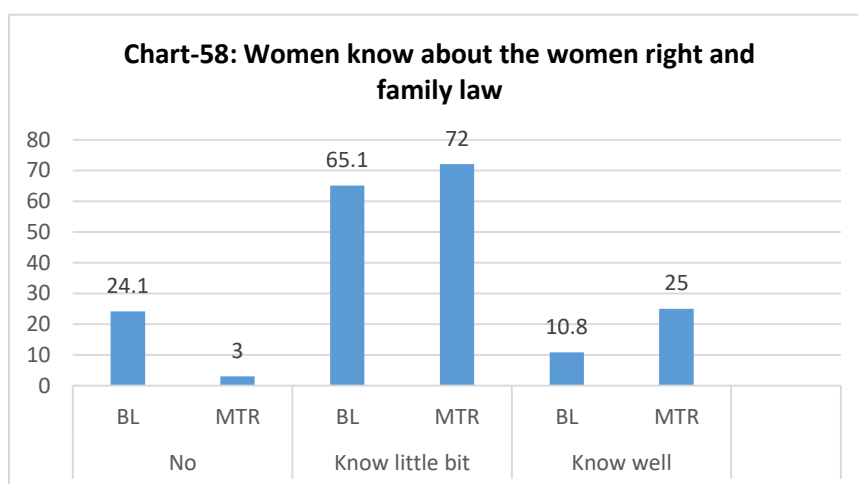
that 35% women now have ownership on land (baseline 8.7%) while 68% on cattle (baseline 12.5%), 54% on poultry (baseline 17.6%), 7% have sewing machine (baseline 1%) and 22% have gold jewelry (baseline 19.2%) (**Chart-57**).

However, only 4% women mentioned that they do not have any ownership on any property or asset (baseline 37.6%). The baseline study findings further shows that only 23% women have full control (baseline 29.7%) on their asset (mainly in women headed household) while 77% have partial control i.e. joint



decision (baseline 49.6) will be needed in case of use or selling.

However, earning income is not the only issue of positional change of women. Rather women controls over on their income are the driving factor. The MTR study found a significant improvement on controlling the income they earn i.e. 75% can use their income on joint decision basis (Baseline 54%) while the full control situation is almost remain same (24%) like baseline period (Chart-58).



	Who is the main decision maker of your family?			Females decide on children's education	Females decide on matrimonial Issues	Females decide on movement and going outside	Females decide on participation in social festivals	Females decide on participation in social movement	Females decide on family expenses
	Male	Female	Both	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Gaibandha	7%	47%	46%	91%	83%	71%	49%	41%	34%
Kurigram	10%	51%	39%	77%	61%	82%	59%	47%	22%
Sherpur	0%	39%	61%	81%	74%	76%	67%	70%	62%
Mymensingh	9%	37%	54%	82%	64%	68%	64%	56%	58%
Jamalpur	1%	35%	65%	89%	72%	70%	59%	65%	58%
Rangpur	18%	26%	56%	53%	42%	82%	69%	53%	15%

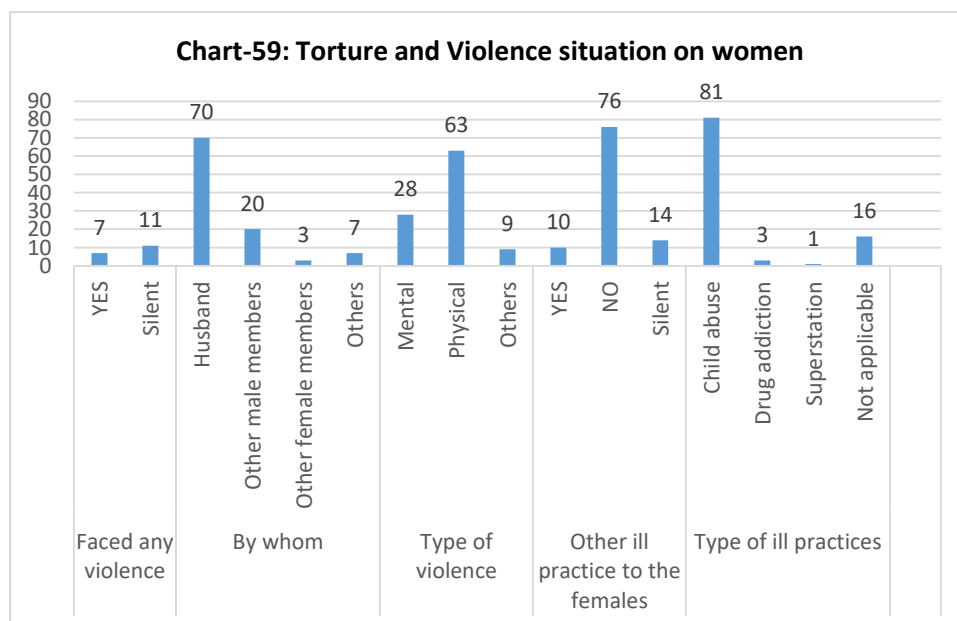
**Knowledge level on Women rights:** The MTR study also collect the knowledge level of the women in the aspects women rights and family laws and it is found that 3% women does not anything in this regard (baseline 25%). Another 72% women know on scattered basis on different aspects of women and child rights (baseline 65%) mainly on age of marriage, punishment against torture and rape etc. 25% women respondents reported that they are well known about different aspects of women rights and family laws (baseline 10.8%). Please see **Chart-58**.

**Decision making ability of women:** The MTR study found that in 26% HHs, male is key decision maker (18% baseline) where as 56% BHHs take joint discussion and 26% cases, women decides. In 42% BHHs women decides on matrimonial issues and 53% BHHs on educational aspects of children. Moreover, 82% women can decide alone to go outside (baseline 48%). The MTR study further expose that 69% women and 53% can decide on participation in social events and movements. However, only 15% women said that they have control over the expenses of the households (**Table-20**).

**Violence against women:** Dominating culture is evident in every sphere of life of Bangladesh society,. Due to patriarchal mindset, male are dominating over female except few ethnic minority communities.

		Bengali	Santal	Oraon	Garo	Hazong	Koch	Dalu	Hari	Others
Base Line	No.	703	56	79	146	11	19	1	18	32
	yes	8.8	5.4	16.5	6.8	0.0	10.5	0.0	0.0	12.5
	silence	2.4	7.1	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
MTR	No	80.9	78.2	98.6	78.6	100.0	78.6	100.0	100.0	95.0
	yes	7.1	9.1	0.0	6.0	0.0	14.3	0	0.0	5.0
	silence	11.9	12.7	1.4	15.4	0.0	7.1	0	0.0	0.0

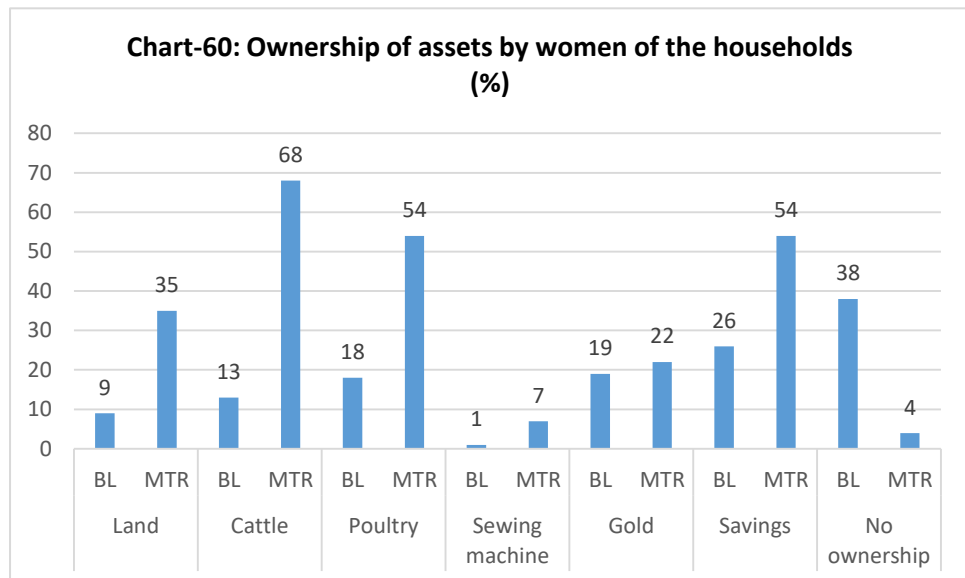
Equal citizenship is noticeably absent in daily lives. Human rights are violated physically and psychologically in family, and in society. Violence against women is violation against human rights. It is curse of human civilization. The MTR study has tried to capture physical violence against women in family over last 12 months ahead of the survey period. The MTR study found that 7% women faced violence and another 11% remain silent (Average respondent 1098) which also a



positive indication, in the base line it was 8.9% women. Among victim, mainly they are tortured by their husband (70%) and other members of the (20%). **Please see Chart-59**.

The violence against women is comparatively high in Koch community followed by Santal, Bengali and Garo community. In ethnic community, main reason was mentioned as local homemade wine addition (**Table-21**).

**Early or Child Marriage:** Child marriage is a traditional practice and culturally deeply embedded in the society of Bangladesh. The project area is not exceptional rather girls are still vulnerable particularly in hard to reach char areas. It is evident that one of the main reasons of child marriage is social construction and stereotype gender role as well as an economic issue. The practice of child marriage often leads to devastating consequences for the girl involved, as well as for her family and the larger community.



Government and development agencies have taken many initiatives and projects to reduce child marriage. By law it is prohibits getting marriage before age 18 for girls and age 21 for boys in Bangladesh. Though the women respondents mentioned that over last 2 years, many girl child was given marriage and average age is below 18 years. However, if the school dropout rate considered, the situation is worse. **The FGD participants mainly refer to the school catchment areas which generally covers a union covering all section of people.** The Data revealed that 18% HHs have went for early marriage and the major cause was that girls reading class 9-10 remain idle during Corona period lock down period and it was a risk for them (baseline 11%).

The child marriage is happened secretly due to various reasons. It has found during FGD that families that are unable to meet needs of their children may offer their young daughters for marriage. In addition, the parents of girls always have sense of insecurity due to eve teasing and violence in the public and private space. The data also reveals that child marriage is related to literacy and lack of education. High educated girls need much dowry amount which is also seen as an economic burden. Marriage is always accepted for uneducated or less educated girl if they have no alternative option. Sometimes, it has found that many child marriages occurred due to premarital relationship between boys and girls which has come out at FGDs in several times.

**3.41.4. Anti-Corruption:**

The SEEDS project has developed one focal point in each PO on anti-corruption. They received training on corruption issues and how to prevent those involving other members and social opinion makers. Similar training was also organized at POs, and Shonglap center etc. SEEDS project also organized training on anti-corruption aspects for partner NGO staff. They organized Anti-corruption day, disseminate anti-corruption messages through establishing bill board, Poster, leaflet, T shirt, Cap, Festoon and sticker. Some of the POs also organized rally to Union Parishad against speed money and nepotism during safety net allocation. The POs also did sharing meeting with Union Parishad and also participated in meeting with Upazila anti-corruption committee. However, gradually union level corruption aspects related to safety net card allocation is gradually reducing. However, in Bangladesh, corruption now become a structural issue and it is not easy for poor women focal persosn and their allies to stop those. It needs more effort and time to have success in this area.

### 3.41.5. Impact of Covid-19

During COVID -19 lock down period many of them are become jobless, especially those who worked in garments, factories (production sector) transportation sector (Bus/Auto driver) or other source of incomes have reduced and as a result many of them have faces financial crisis and they are not able to have food for once in a day but as usually they need to have minimum food in three times a day .Some children have dropped out from

	Suffered by Corona	Received covid-19 related training	Received any hygienic support	Received food item/cash support
Gaibandha	9.1%	97.3%	84.9%	73.1%
Jamalpur	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	92.9%
Kurigram	22.4%	98.4%	76.5%	85.2%
Mymensingh	4.4%	96.1%	99.4%	95.6%
Rangpur	18.8%	92.5%	81.2%	79.6%
Sherpur	4.4%	100.0%	99.4%	91.7%
Average	9.9%	97.4%	90.2%	86.2%

school due closure of educational institute during COVID-19 period. Besides, COVID-19 have effect on various social issues like child marriage, domestic violence, theft etc. During COVID-19 period members have received UP assistances like food items through the communication with UP member and chairman. All participants received hygiene material support from partner NGOs for one time that was not full fill their long term requirement. In caritas, BHHs received cash support from the project that helps to overcome the vulnerable situation. Social functions or activities were not possible to arrange for them. Specially suffering a lot those who are in aged as they have no money for primary medical support. The MTR study has collected information related to water borne and hygiene related diseases including Covid-19. **It is found that average 10% of the BHHs have suffered from Covid-19** and the severity was high in Kurigram 22% and Rangpur 19%. However, the project has created awareness through Corona Volunteer team formation and it is found that 97.4% BHHs have received such training.

Moreover, almost 90% BHHs have received different hygiene material such as mask, soap, sanitizer etc. **(Table-22)**. During the lock down period, with the support of the project staff and corona volunteer team, they (86%) received food support from government and other NGOs. THE MTR team also came to know that Caritas has got support from SF on food items for 420 BHHS worth 1620 BDT. The study further tried to capture the perception of respondents about the impact of lockdown/shut

	Spent saved money	sale out cattle	Sale out Land	Sale advance labor	Stop Children education related expenses	Reduce meal items	Lending money
Gaibandha	92.4%	49.4%	18.6%	25.0%	24.4%	30.2%	41.3%
Jamalpur	98.9%	59.8%	14.5%	37.4%	40.2%	41.9%	59.8%
Kurigram	74.2%	29.8%	15.2%	47.8%	28.7%	52.2%	47.2%
Mymensingh	88.2%	25.5%	2.0%	40.5%	28.1%	46.4%	37.9%
Rangpur	72.3%	6.0%	11.4%	44.6%	14.5%	59.0%	57.2%
Sherpur	84.6%	50.9%	11.2%	39.6%	32.0%	42.0%	55.6%
Average	85.2%	37.4%	12.4%	39.1%	28.1%	45.2%	50.0%

down period due to Corona pandemic. The 92.6% respondents have mentioned that they have suffered from economic loss during the time. In addition, 96.6% BHHS opined that they become poorer than before (no benchmark year) though the MTR study has found that the income and productive asset base have increased significantly than the baseline period **(Table-23)**.

The MTR assume that if there were no lock/shut down period of Covid-19, the income and asset base would be more than the findings MTR found.

In order to cope with the situation, almost 85% BHHs used their saved money, 37% BHHs have sold out their cattle, 12% have sold out their land and 39% have went through advance labor selling. Moreover, 28% BHHs have stopped the education related expenses and 45% have reduce their meal items. In addition, 50% BHHs have borrowed money from different sources.

### 3.41. *Multidimensional Poverty Analysis*

The **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** was developed in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative and the United Nations Development Programme and uses different factors to determine poverty beyond income-based lists. It replaced the previous Human Poverty Index. The MPI can be used to create a comprehensive picture of people living in poverty, and permits comparisons both across countries, regions and the world and within countries by ethnic group, urban/rural location, as well as other key household and community characteristics.

The index uses the same three dimensions as the Human Development Index: health, education, and standard of living. These are measured using ten indicators.

<b>Dimensions of poverty</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Deprived if...</b>	<b>Weight</b>	
Health	Nutrition	Any adult under 70 years of age or any child for whom there is nutritional information is undernourished.*	1/6	0.1667
	Child mortality	Any child has died in the family in the five-year period preceding the survey. <sup>7</sup>	1/6	0.1667
Education	Years of schooling	No household member aged 10 years or older has completed six years of schooling.	1/6	0.1667
	School attendance	Any school-aged child+ is not attending school up to the age at which he/she would complete class 8.	1/6	0.1667
Living standards	Cooking fuel	The household cooks with dung, wood, charcoal or coal.	1/36	.05555
	Sanitation	The household's sanitation facility is not improved (according to SDG guidelines) or it is improved but shared with other households.**	1/18	.05555
	Drinking water	The household does not have access to improved drinking water (according to SDG guidelines) or safe drinking water is at least a 30-minute walk from home, round trip.***	1/18	.05555
	Electricity	The household has no electricity.	1/18	.05555
	Housing	At least one of the three housing materials for roof, walls and floor are inadequate: the floor is of natural materials and/or the roof and/or walls are of natural or rudimentary materials.****	1/18	.05555
	Assets	The household does not own more than one of these assets: radio, TV, mobile phone and battery operated autos, animal cart, bicycle, motorbike or refrigerator,	1/18	.05555



However, in this study, the MPI calculation is made considering a household is deprived on any specific indicator or not. Each dimension and each indicator within a dimension is weighted. **A household is considered poor if they are deprived in at least a third of the weighted indicators (33)<sup>1</sup>.**

Score ci (sum of each deprivation multiplied by its weight)		Is the household poor (c $\geq 1/3 = 0.333$ )?			Score	Is the household poor (c $\geq 1/3 = 0.333$ )?	
	MTR Mean	BL	MTR		MTR Mean	MTR	BL
Gaibandha	0.291592	75.9%	44.1%	Fulchhari	0.339138	55.9%	73.1%
				Gaibandha Sadar	0.322222	64.0%	80.0%
				Gobindaganj	0.222222	17.6%	73.0%
Jamalpur	0.344628	69.4%	58.8%	Bakshiganj	0.353009	58.3%	71.4%
				Dewanganj	0.328571	52.9%	64.2%
				Islampur	0.355903	65.6%	72.4%
Kurigram	0.291743	84.3%	48.6%	Kurigram Sadar	0.255556	41.4%	86.1%
				Nageshwari	0.320151	55.9%	78.3%
				Ulipur	0.307613	50.0%	90.4%
Mymensingh	0.275309	67.0%	37.0%	Dhobaura	0.260141	28.6%	71.4%
				Haluaghat	0.272650	39.4%	62.3%
				Phulpur	0.297009	44.2%	66.1%
Rangpur	0.266967	72.6%	38.2%	Badarganj	0.286596	44.4%	75.0%
				Mithapukur	0.272537	40.7%	80.0%
				Pirganj	0.244767	30.4%	61.9%
Sherpur	0.295062	76.6%	43.9%	Jhenaigati	0.288288	45.9%	76.5%
				Nalitabari	0.287326	40.6%	78.3%
				Sreebardi	0.318783	45.2%	75.0%
Average	0.294165	74.3%	45.1%	Average	0.294165	45.1%	74.3%

Based on this calculation, the study found that 30% HHS have improve their poverty status in terms of the indicators of MPI. The baseline figure was 74.3 % households who were deprived or in extreme poor condition where Kurigram district has maximum extreme poor (84.3) while Mymensingh district has comparatively low (67.2). **Please see Table -25).**



<sup>1</sup>National MPI that was used in MPI report 2018 as in the global MPI's dimensions, indicators, and cutoffs (The benchmark value is 33%). e mail of Bishnu Kumar Shrestha <[Bishnu.Shrestha@stromme.org](mailto:Bishnu.Shrestha@stromme.org)> to Ravi Shankar Rajaratnam <[RajaratnamRavi.Shankar@stromme.org](mailto:RajaratnamRavi.Shankar@stromme.org)>; Rahul Kanti Barua <[rahul.kanti.barua@stromme.org](mailto:rahul.kanti.barua@stromme.org)>., dated : Monday, February 25, 2019 1:35 PM



## CHAPTER Five: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

### 4. Analysis and opinions

In this chapter, the analysis of findings conducted focusing on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, outcome and income, and sustainability of SEEDS project activities.

#### 4.1. Relevance

The project is being implemented in a diverse geo-physical settings and with various ethnic group. The project sites belonged to climate vulnerable areas. Due to the impact of multi-hazard disasters, HHs are living in vicious poverty cycle. Every year, they are facing such challenges of disaster and re-start from the starting of their progress of life and livelihoods. Based on the above identified needs and vulnerability, the Strategy and Interventions of SEEDS project were designed.

Thus relevance and appropriateness of the SEEDS has been found satisfactory in order to meet some of the basic needs and rights of the targeted beneficiaries and country priorities. It was evident that women got emphasis in livelihood development as well as to develop their “agency”. At the same time, it was also observed that the project staff gave less priority for the children and women with disabilities which need to emphasize since none of the person with disabilities were included in the TVET program or any of the social structure. The objectives, goals and outcomes of the project have been found consistent. The relevance of the training, service and supports for improving socio-economic situation delivered to the beneficiaries have been found relevant but the staff members are not that much capable to grasp the inner sense of the project approach and principles. At the same time, project should include more activities for the capacity development of PO/WCs to take their community development responsibility. It was also observed that the local powerful people and duty bearers have changed their attitude and give focus to the poor community people. Gradually the situation of poor women is improving and they are getting access to the local resources and power system. Initiating the use of digital platforms for meeting and coordination found highly relevant during lock down period.

Though the situation of the project beneficiaries have improved a lot, but still some of the activities need to be streamlined such as climate resilient production technologies, remunerable and decent job or self-employment creation, involving men in the project processes, improving the engagement of local community and SMCs as well as setting guideline for TVET programmes etc. In addition, some of the activities need to emphasized and few of the activities from present package can be excluded, those discussed under Recommendation section.

The MTR team found that most of the government primary schools far away from the the communities difficult to send their young child to those schools for pre-primary education. In Mymensingh and Sherpur areas where the Garo and Hajong communities are living with their mother tongue. They do not have the opportunity to get mother tongue education in the mainstream primary school because in most of the case teachers use Bangla medium of instruction which does not easily communicate with the ethnic children.

The project is implementing a mother tongue based Multilingual Education (MLE) pre-primary learning center, where ethnic children learning through their own language and then bridging in the formal education system.

Therefore, the relevance of the project and need for pre-primary learning center, child club for providing remedial support to the weaker student and Shanlop for the adolescent to provide life skills, self-esteem, confidence and knowledge will remain in some time in future too.

***The revised SEEDS project framework may directly contribute in achieving SDG goal 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 as well as partially contribute in SDG 9, 13 and 16. 1.***

#### **4.2. Effectiveness**

The SEEDS project contributes in achieving the outcomes considering the social and economic empowerment aspects to some extent since the project is passing its mid. Each HHs received training, seeds and saplings, TVET participants are getting income oriented skill (though many of them (40%) are not economically productive), seed money for initiating business and associated skills for their income generation purpose. Through different training, orientation, meetings the beneficiaries are capable to build their assets and to protect it. During the period, the POs and HHs developed relationships with GO-NGO and private service providers, to receive their services. The data revealed that the project interventions improved the health and nutritional status of targeted community people as well as the better living condition. They are now producing vegetables, turned the homestead as production hub, improve water and sanitation system, maintaining hygiene behaviors in most of the cases. Almost 100% households are drinking safe water from tube well and using the same water for cooking purpose. The use of water sealed latrine is increased. The HH members gained accessibility to take health services from the nearby public health institutions. Majority of the HH are now having three meals every day. The project is reducing poverty, food insecurity, WASH situations etc. In the project area, the poor women were not involved in income generating activities. Now the project ensured the productive assets and women are the owner of it. The introduction of the community managed savings and loan activities started though it needs further strengthening can be a glue for unity of loan though a robust fund management system need to be introduced.

Smrity Akter. Secretary of the WC. She is also the CSP. GUK staff told that this village is commercial village. But the members said that they cultivated mainly for consumption and only 4 beneficiaries have sold out 21 bottle gourd/ CSP do not know or could not explain what sessions/suggestions she made to the group members on agriculture. She does not know her role also. Hand pollination is need over their but the CSP do not know the technique. She also did not recall any of the issues she learned from the training. But she is taking session's conduction fee. Moreover, she also received tailoring training as TVET participants. It seems that a resource erosion or elite capture was happened over there.

The accessibility of basic quality education for children has increased compared to the before project status. However, it is difficult to make comments about the enrollment and reducing dropout rate since the schools were closed almost for two years. The Shonglap activities observed effective to empower the girls but need more effort. The Shonglap Forum needs further streamline since it is just started.

The target BHHs directly increases their income by 33% and subsistence level production increased that improves their food security, nutritional situation and better livelihood situation. The resource base of productive assets and income has significantly increased. The the numbers of landless reduced and the ownership on homestead and cultivable lands increased due to their economic growth. In addition, the project was able to build a huge productive resource base which will certainly pay dividend to fight any future crisis period. The project focused and intervened on the social mechanism and enhancing the access and rights of poor and marginal community people by uniting them into small groups and peoples' organization. Thus most of the project interventions are found effective and eventually the project is running towards reaching its goal.

The biggest success of the project is that it has ensured reasonably good quality pre-primary education for the 5 years old children near to their door stapes, education support to the poor marginalized

deprive weaker children from grade 3 and 4 through child club, providing life skills and awareness session for the adolescent to boost up their self-esteem through Shonglap who otherwise will remain uneducated for rest of their life. Beside there has been stable increase of enrolment and attendance of students in project supported formal schools. We were confirmed by the CMC, SMC, parents and teacher of the formal school that we visited that pre-school children are learning well and they are successfully enrolled in the mainstream school. There has been significant awareness commitment among the parents to let their children in school.

These achievements have been possible through setting up pre-school center, child club and Shonglap for the adolescent to providing education for the children and adolescent in the communities through joyful learning environment. But there are bunch of slow learners who are the member of the child club need more learning competency level appropriate support to overcome their learning loss. Due to long time school closed the project did not get the opportunity to sensitize the government actors to provide quality education based on the appropriate need of the community.

#### 4.3. *Efficiency*

Considering the 3 elements of Value for money (economy, efficiency, effectiveness), the team is drawing conclusions that the project has been implemented in mixed manner i.e. quantitative achievement is achieved in most of the cases except some of the training, workshops and day observing, rallies due to Corona lockdown which significantly reduced the quality impacts and outputs. The PNGO management and project staff also agreed that the quality achievement was not attain fully

The achievements of the quantitative targets of SEEDS have been found satisfactory though there are room for improvement. The project has created several impacts in income and employment aspects. . It has been observed that all partner have spent almost 95% to 99% of budgeted amount for last 3 years. From that perspective, the MTR team conceived that there were much scope to utilize the money for quality implementation of the programme or can save for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year to conduct more TVET training from BTEB accredited institutions. One NGO also spent 152% of operational cost which is generally unusual. The project has already addressed some of these problems and still it has been trying to solve other problems. Though lockdown period of Corona has disrupted many of the activities, but there are still time to overcome those by fine tuning some of the activities.

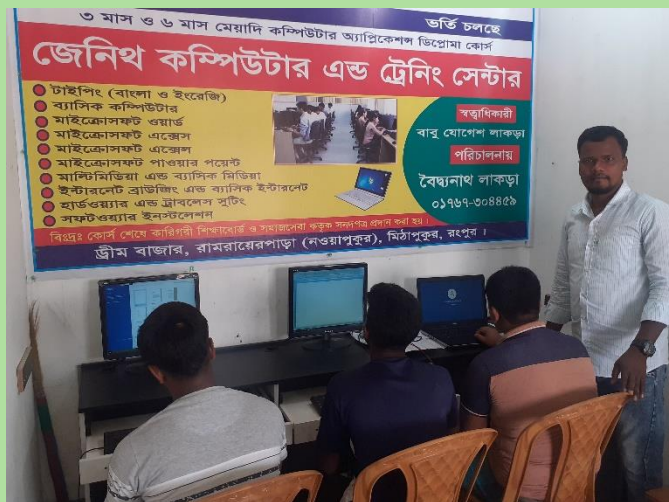
NGO Name	Budget (2019-2021)	Expense (December 2021)	%
RDRS (operation-152%)	43194589	42722218	99%
ESDO	50371291	48999314	97%
GUK	44763937	43312060	97%
SUS	45347672	43118054	95%
US	46616042	45504963	97.6%
Caritas	43,854,232	43,205,626	98.52

The participants are well known about the project activities. Most of the participants are able to answer the beneficiary's selection, group formation, WC formation procedure and the activities that are initiated by the project like, Child club/Shonglap forum/Primary education/skill training on vegetable gardening, livestock, tailoring, garments etc. They have attended the various awareness trainings like; GBV, early marriage, disaster management, climate change, COVID-19 etc. They are known about the SEEDs project beneficiaries' selection, group formation which have motivated members to conducted meeting and training to properly trained up them regarding various projects initiatives like; training on gardening, cattle management, Shonglap center etc..

However in SUS, most of the participants could not explain/answered the project activities except two members. Even the both who answered that were not full of ideas. As per statement of participants five persons have participated various training like; vegetable gardening, poultry & cattle rearing that was held SUS office, UP office and HHs level. But they could not answer what type of training was held at UP level they have participated. The participants are known about the project activities but can't talk the all issues/interventions. Similar findings were observed in Jamalpur also.

### Baidya Lakra: Kindling light for his Community

Baidya Lakra(25), Son of Mr. Jogesh Lakra and Ms. Shukur Moni is a permanent resident of Naoapara village of Mirzapur Union under Mithapukur Upazial of Rangpur district. Altogether they are 4 members family. His younger sister passed higher secondary level education. His father do the broker of cattle selling and buying and his mother do sell wage labor in agriculture field. With this income, they were passing their livelihood. His mother become the member of "Asha Alo" SRG. Though they are poor but his parent supported them for continuing education. Baidya Lakra has completed post-graduation degree in Bangla subject. During his forth years of Bachelor degree, he applied to RDRS SEEDS project for getting skill training on "Basic Computer Operation". He was selected for training and received a training on Computer operation from a private Training Centre with the support of SEEDS project during 10.02.2020 to 30.05.2020. Now he opened his own enterprise in nearby market namely "Zenith Computer Training Center". He is now earning average 10000 BDT per month. Meanwhile he learned the outsourcing of computer based work and earn additionally 60,000 BDT per month. He is now providing training to other young boys and girls in his community and adjacent areas. He is dreaming for better entrepreneurs in future and willing to devote himself for the betterment of his ethnic minority Community. He is indebted to RDRS and SEEDS project for his success. He recommended to continue the skill training program for the unemployed youth.



#### 4.4. Project Management

Staff and project management do not have idea and plan on how they tap services from other NGOs, Projects etc. There should have Detailed Implantation Plan/guideline in Bangla for field staff for quality implementation of the project. In Caritas, the found staff work plan, regular monthly meeting resolution, schedule, module, back to office report of POs are observed. How a staff will deliver a session or perform an activity, such guideline and quality parameter, schedule is not exist in most of the NGOs. There is no detailed project implementation plan suitable for the field staff. Overall conceptual gap on project concept and processes exists among field staff. Staff are not clear on the self-help approach as the MTR team observed in their groups and with discussion of them. Till staff mind set are need base and could not shift to right base approach. Regular staff coordination meeting at Upazila and project office is not conducted in most of the NGOs. In the resolution of SRG and Ward committee, all the project jargons in English were used and beneficiaries do not know the meaning of

the word such as safety net, PSPM etc. (GUK). It should be avoided. During data survey at Islampur Upazila, it was found that, the project staffs move Char areas very rarely that is why beneficiaries gained a little idea about project activities.

After a turmoil situation of previous PC change along with program focal person and a death of an M&E officer, the quality and quantity is a major concern in SUS. There are 22.38% staff turnover rate in overall. In 2021, 52% turn over occurred including a 9- 10 months absence of a M&E Officer, which indicates less importance given by the Central management of SUS. Even 6 staff member position found vacant for long time including a Upazila Coordinator. It was found through a discussion with the project staffs that, the field level activities are being disrupted due to repeatedly drop out of two Upazila Coordinator. After 3 years of project, they are still busy with developing training schedule and module. Supervision and monitoring from SUS head office is very poor. Also it was felt that newly appointed staffs were not properly oriented on the project.

The Strømme Foundation SEEDS Project Team based at Dhaka Country Office observed structured and regularly facilitating the implementing partners staff. The Stromme Foundation Senior Coordinators continued structured Result Based Monitoring and Follow-up system for quality implementation of project activities at all project sites with the support of Monitoring officers. Based on the findings of RBM, it has been observed that the project achieved most of the activities. However, the data were collected by the internal staff that may create biasness.

The Executive Director/Chief Executives of partner NGOs is structurally responsible for overall management of the programme management which is delegated to senior staff as the focal person . The Project Coordinator arranged meeting with all the program staff to review the progress. However, the understanding of HID, values for different stage of organization development and management, marketing, value chain analysis and business development among staff member and management need further improvement.

Most of the activities are planned and implemented with the prior discussion and decision with the Project Coordinator where involvement of Partners central Management is less. These process sometimes reduce the opportunity of making synergies with other project and achievement of that particular NGO in their working area. Participation of central office representatives in coordination meetings may open new window of integration of other competencies and experiences the SEEDS project is facing as challenge.

#### **4.5. Monitoring**

Monitoring has been found as the integral and ongoing process of the SEEDS. Monitoring report has been found integrated with the LFA indicators. Result Based Monitoring has been given preference. On the other hand, quality implementation process, systematic follow up and supervision were not given that much priority in most of the NGOs. The Result based Monitoring observed strongly structured and continued. The project RBM is continued on monthly, quarterly, six monthly, and annual monitoring and indicator based reporting and found effective. The team did not find any back to office reporting of the POs or Upazila managers on quality feedback/ monitoring process except Caritas. Written feedback report can help to track the progress of feedback as well as lead towards a continuous follow up. The role of Upazila Coordinator, Is not clear particular what they do in the field and what are the feedback given to the staff was not found. The qualitative monitoring observed less in practice. The key missing part was the follow-up of activities after initiation till the end of that activity. Key reason is observed during review with the project team that the M&E is the separate issue and being conducted only by the M&E Officer.

In fact, SF has been playing imperative role in monitoring and supervision of the SEEDS activities while the partner organizations have relatively passive role in this regard. During Corona period, the field visit and support from SF was comparatively less.



#### 4.6. **Impact**

There is a significant achievement on economic activities which ultimately help the people to lift out from poverty (almost 30% BHHs lifted out from poverty as per MPI analysis). The IGA plan are elaborated in the FDPs and jointly reviewed with the active participation of family members. From the reports of the project and FGDs with the beneficiaries, it is observed that target people had several training and orientation as well as court yard sessions on vegetable gardening, cattle and poultry rearing have contributed a lot in overcoming the bad situation due to corona where women played the main role. In addition, almost 60% BHHs have created access to different safety net and relief services that prevent them to fall back to further misery. The achieved skills and competencies increasing their economic growth and sustainable poverty reduction. In addition to individual initiatives, SRGs also took collective and coordinated activities in order to support the individual initiatives e.g. linking with service provision, seed and other input procurement etc. The training and upgrading of skills and capacity component the project have contributed a lot in creating additional income and sustainability of the technologies disseminated. The income from off farm and on farm activities showed a increased trend. It is mentioned above that the involvement of HHs have been increased sharply in the on farm activities thus resulted in reducing some of odd off farm income activities e.g. gift/Zakat, motor cycling driving on rental basis, traditional income like blacksmith, pottery etc. **The average per capita per day income is found as 66.5 Taka during MTR (base line 51.5 Taka). It is also found that around 32.5% BHHs go beyond 80 taka per capita and per day income that was only 13% HHs during baseline survey.**

The economic progress of poor households through the support of SEEDS made substantial contribution to strengthen the relationship with civil society, local government institutions (LGIs), Government sectors and local NGOs. The project beneficiaries have been getting benefits from these sources in order to establish their rights as well as moving forward toward their empowerment. The increase of awareness and income of poor households consequently helped reducing the discrimination, violence, cruelty, torture, and inhuman or degrading / shameful treatment against women and children. All these have been very significant achievements of the SEEDS.

The project introduced various support services related to quality education such as preprimary schools, bridge school, child club and quality enhancement of government primary schools. Over last two years, since the schools were closed due to Covid -19 lock down, now the staff has to give more effort to enhance the involvement of SMCs, parent teachers meetings.

In addition, the project beneficiaries have generated significant amount of savings, also they have gained new land, higher productive asset base, better housing, better health care facilities, balance food for 3 times a day and better purchasing power along with other better livelihood options. However, there is a lack of deliberated effort for community development activities as well as to support most vulnerable households beyond the SRG members. It's a values question ad that need to be addressed during leadership development processes.

The result of the project reflects that the students who have lack behind to achieve grade level learning competencies resume their study in the formal school after the initiatives been taken by the child club facilitator. Many who would not be able to continue their education because of their learning deficiency were brought under child club support, the children who received pre-school education will successfully cope with the formal education system will be easier for them to continue their education. Shongla adolescent have enhance their capacity, increase confidence level and interpersonal communication and aware about their future will help them to increase their roles in the family and society. They have the capacity to participate in the family decision making process, ability dissolve conflict at the family as well as community, better adjustment in the workplace will help to develop their socio-economic status.

## Shopna: An Idol for her community

Sreemoti Shopna Rani, a member of Char Dagarkuthi Hizli gope para SRG of Hatia union under Ulipur Upazila. The village is a river island surrounded by the river. In the village, there are 9 SRGs and total members are 94. Shopna is the member of one SRG.

Shopna Rani, received training, seed inputs and cultivated seed. As like others, she also cultivated pumpkin in her lease land. Previously she owned 02 goat. After receiving training on goat rearing, she rear the goats in more modern way with support of Livestock Service Provider Mr. Shah Alam. She had a dream to change her housing status, WASH facilities and to be economically solvent. After one year, she sold out pumpkin amounting to 16000 BDT and



also sold out 6 goats worth BDT. 34000. Altogether, with 50,000 BDT, she bought 2 OXes and went for beef fattening with the support of local livestock Service Provider. After one year she sold out the Oxe and earn



BDT. 250,000, she spent the money to buy one cow of 30000 taka, a power tiller with BDT 36000 for her son for rental service. Her son received Power tiller operation and maintenance training from SEEDS project of ESDO following Ostad -Shishya model. Now every day, her son is earning BDT 200-250 and supporting for household chores. Shopna also meanwhile supported her husband with additional for money for increasing the Rug business. Now, they have changed their houses wall and roof to CI Sheet, established sanitary latrine and Tube wells. She is now more than. She has now 10 goats, 1 cow,

and plenty of vegetables in the homestead. The SRGs have established local collection ad selling hub in the Char and Invite traders to come down over there. Weekly two days, the traders come and buy their produces including vegetables, egg, and other items. Now they do not need to go too far reach market. Shopna is also the member of said market management committee. She is now happy and become an idol in her community.

### 4.7. Sustainability

The SEEDS project will be ended after 2 years and sustainability of achievements and gradual taking over the responsibility from project staff to POs leaders a is yet a big concern. The sustainability of project achievement need to be given serious thought as many factors outside the project context play vital roles. The other most important issues are: how the Human and Institutional Development aspects sustain beyond the project phase including streams of available service provisions will continue to pay dividend. Currently, the PO / WC were found somehow incapable to take responsibility of small groups. But, the SEEDS has still two years' time in hand to develop the capacity of PO /WC. In next two years the SEEDS has to deliver responsibility to the capable PO/WC to prove their competency towards sustainability. POs leaders are gradually acquiring capacity and hopefully will speed up since Covid-19 restrictions are withdrawn.



Gradual withdrawal of monetary support for LSP can be helpful as they are earning much more than the project by their occupation. A sustainable marketing approach needs to be established. Alongside of SRG, the WC/PO also providing support and guidance in implementing the undertaken activities. In this regard, they need special value development to support the community and the most vulnerable people. The TVET programme needs to give thought towards higher and decent income generation. The commercial village can be sustainable if the mindset changing activities imparted that shift the mindset from “grow and sell” to “grow to sell”. The male members’ involvement is a must for commercial village. The present focus of commercial village is only vegetable. This needs to be diversified and thrust should be given on all other resources of on farm, off farm and non-farm resources and skills. It is also anticipated that the Partner NGOs will shift the main responsibility to the respective POs and Union level platforms and facilitates to establish linkage with Union Parishad and relevant line Departments. For the longer term sustainability, the POs need to accumulate all savings of all SRGs in one account so that they can help effectively their members for income generating activities, and need to shift their focus on mobilizing local resources and services as their rights. As a result, the creation or formation of PO/WC by the SEEDS will be emerged as a real platform for the vulnerable poor people of the society.

The community should also gradually take over the responsibility of running the preprimary by paying the honorarium of the teachers and animators following cost sharing approach. The MTR team further understand that the major benefit of the project intervention is coming from the pre-school center that are providing basic competencies among the children to prepare them for the formal education. It is evident that most of the parents will send their children to the mainstream primary school after completion of the pre-school. The learning experience and the opportunity created by enhanced competency will have lifelong impact on those children and it is applicable for both child club children and Shonglap adolescent.

## 5. Lessons Learned

The key lessons learned is the integrated programming of need based and right based approaches at the same time for the project beneficiaries, where, the HH are implementing their IGAs and their POs are working to enhance the accessibility on rights and services related to their IGAs, Education, Health and Nutrition. In addition, following are the key best practices observed:

- From the evaluator’s point of view one of the significant lessons learned from the SEEDS that in Upazilas, a large numbers of households have went through homestead based income generation activities since Lock down period stuck the male members from earning.
- Involvement of targeted families in the planning process i.e. FDP and SGPs has ignited their potentials and develop the ownership in their own development process. These exercises contributed to shift the mind-set of targeted HHs from relief to self-help process.
- Commercial village and RRC seems a good intervention if it is properly implemented
- If facilitation done properly then leveraging with other projects operated in same area can give better result (Caritas MAWTS)
- Awareness on different entitlement of community people stimulates the process to claim their rights & entitlements from respective duty bearers.
- If local stakeholders and duty bearers are involved from planning to implementation process, they become positive and respond positively within their scope of work.
- Empowerment of adolescent girls by Shonglap Forum contributes to develop an enlightened society if properly facilitated.
- The LSPs and CSPs have created sustainable income sources by selling their skills, input and advice, which found as a very good secondary impact of the project for employment generation.

## 6. Best practice:

- Many new initiatives have been undertaken during lockdown period for better communication, coordination at management level such as zoom, Microsoft meet, Skype, WhatsApp group have contributed in programme implementation. All those will have long term impact in project management.
- During Covid period, continue education activities in small groups in Preschool, Child club, found effective. Conducting SRG and Ward Committee meeting in small groups also helped to maintain relationship with the BHHS.
- Awareness campaign for hygiene practices and vaccination by SRG leaders, CSP, TVET participants and publishing of poster, sticker, using loud speaker, billboard, festoon, poster found effective. Ensure hand wash point at SRG, WC, Schools, Shonglap center, child club etc. found effective to aware community in general on Covid-19 issues.
- Mask preparation and distribution by SHONGLAP girls Vaccine campaign for ethnic minority beneficiaries found effective.
- Involvement of Shonglap animator, preschool teacher, ward committee leaders, school teachers for disseminating awareness raising leaflet for Covid-19 also contributed well.
- Able to capture services and facilities government and non-government organizations.
- The parents and Shonglap girls support school authorities for improving school hygiene condition after lockdown period for safe return of students in schools.
- Making list of vulnerable group members by Covid response committee and submit to UP and service providing agencies to get relief and other services found effective to keep the group members safe from financial risk. Ward committee and Shonglap forum also collected donation from local community and distributed among most vulnerable households
- Continuous and effective support of CSPs during lock down period keep continue the group members productive.
- Similarly provide support to send daily wage labor to other districts for paddy harvesting maintaining hygiene rules to continue income of the BHHS (57 participant, GUK).
- Staff adapted with new digital technologies that helps to continue the program.

## Chapter Six: Recommendation and Conclusion

### 7. General Recommendations

#### Thematic Goal: Building strong Society

##### **FDP, SRG and WC aspects**

- As suggested by Partner NGOs, from 2<sup>nd</sup> year the FDPs and onwards, the FDP, SRG and WC planning exercise can be practiced using A4 paper. For new member inclusion, the FDP exercise should be continued in visualization process with accompaniment support of the existing members.
- The POs should have strong working relation with the union level government services providers to derive benefit of services for their group members and community development. Accordingly, the WCs should have regular working relation with SRGs that should channel up from individual beneficiary to WC/PO and vice versa.
- A democratic process of leadership change may be introduced which would be maximum for two terms for a specific person. Alternative leadership building strategy need to undertake in the follow up phase.
- Need capacity building of staff and POs leaders on different phases of organization development, its management and related values.
- A manual is also need to be developed for organization management and fund management.
- In the FDPs, the team did not find activities for supporting the other vulnerable people outside the SRGs membership. There should a need of “values development” both at staff and POs level on social responsibility as there are new extreme poor in the POs catchments area.
- Union Committee should take lead role in social and rights activities but still is not functioning. However, two NGOs yet not convinced to go for union committee on the other hand one (RDRS) is developing a parallel structure in the same union that should be avoided. Thus it has been recommended that at this stage the formation of the tertiary group (third tire) would not be feasible.
- The POs leaders require more training and support like communication with UP and relevant government sector.
- The project should maintain strategic involvement of Government service delivery agencies e.g. Department of Agriculture Extension, Department of Livestock Services and Department of Youth Development, Technical Training Centers, etc. in the project processes. For the purpose, the project may have some coordination mechanism at implementation level i.e. UP, Upazila, district and divisional level. MOU and joint resolution can be developed for tapping the services and facilities of different departments of government.
- Since the Union Parishad Election was just completed, it is the right time to advocate for inclusion of POs representative in different standing committees of Union Parishad.

##### **Fund Management**

- The SRG and PO level savings fund management guideline need to be developed and practiced in a robust manner as they are not practicing any solid/unique savings and loan management system.
- System should be introduced to open up the membership (new poor) in SRGs from poorer committee.
- The decisions related to all loan provision and group IGA fund management issues should be written in group resolution book as a meeting decision. There should also be guide line on how the losses (if any) and/or profit can be shared among the members.
- The already opened bank account of POs need to be operated in a professional manner.

## B. Ensuring Inclusive Quality Education

### Pre-school

- Local communities do not have the ability to take over the pre-school. The sustainability issues of the pre-school need to discuss with guardians and CMC member so that they are mentally prepared for spending some money to continue the pre-school for the early development of the children. The project staff should discuss this issue with the guardian, community and CMC
- It is necessary to establish learning center near to the home of the children. So, it would be very useful to build a learning center in the community. Then it would be possible for the community to run the preschool. The project should take initiative to establish a learning center with the help of community and potential donor at locally so that it can be continued even after withdrawal of the project.

### Child club

- The child facilitator has capacity gap in proper assessment technique and to provide appropriate learning support to the weaker student. The basic training and the child club guide did not focus on these. Child Facilitator need to train on children's subject specific individual level assessment so that she can identify the learning level of the student through a baseline assessment at the beginning of the school and can provide support. The child facilitator facilitator's guide focuses on the learning gap from grad 2 but many children visited during MTR was found learning gaps at great one level, which need to properly addressed.

### Shinglap Forum

- Assembling of Shonglap forum girls is a problem. There is no specific place for assembling after ending of shonglap center. It is suggested to use community infrastructure (School room, Union Hall room).

### Formal School support;

- The project should extend its support for the government school to enhance the capacity of the teacher as well as SMC. And provide orientation on how to provide support to the weaker students to overcome their learning gap happened due to long time school closer during COVID 19 pandemic situation.
- SF should provide classroom-based library in the government primary school and to provide training to the school teacher so that they can run classroom-based library activities. Only providing books to the school in not ensure the reading of the books by the children.

## C. Creating Livelihood and job opportunity

### Self-employment and Income generating activities

- Commercial village does not necessarily mean to vegetable production only. The MTR results found that average 51% BHHs are rearing cattle and 69% are rearing poultry on commercial basis. Whereas only around 17% HHs are producing vegetables on commercial basis though 73% are cultivating vegetable for subsistence.
- The project should work more to change the mindset of the beneficiaries from "grow for consumption and sell" to "grow to Sell". In such cases, involvement of male members of the household is essential in developing production plan and training on production technologies.
- Each HH need to identify at least one potential IGA (keeping rests as subsistence level) to scale up into enterprise adding up with value chain like as Poultry rearing and vegetable production. That may help them to increase their income and come out from the vicious cycle of poverty. Also, HH have to explore to increase more off-farm IGAs compared to on-farm ones to reduce the nature dependency considering their locations of multi-hazard prone areas.
- Considering fund from three sources; project grant, HHs contribution and soft loan from external sources may contribute in developing viable enterprise development and project

staff should facilitate BHHs for potential commercial activities. This matching fund at household level to operate enterprise will ensure financial viability.

- After accomplishing first level of capacity building initiatives, 2<sup>nd</sup> level of capacity building (e.g. own fund management, entrepreneurship development, value added activities etc.) is needed for the sustainability of achievement as well as for further growth.
- The project also can invite the successful women entrepreneurs as role model in the campaign and awareness session in WCs or in big event as a motivational tool.
- The “Rural Resource Centre” is a good option for linking the producers of beneficiaries with market actors. However, since staff do not perceive the basic concepts of commercial village, sometimes they facilitate to establish RRCs in a place, where already collection centers or wholesale market exists. Thus many of the RRCs are not working well. These gaps need to be addressed.
- The team has seen in Kurigram and Rangpur that, beneficiaries are selling egg, poultry, banana etc. along with vegetable. It is suggested to go for value chain analysis of these products so that they can earn more.

### **Community Service Provision**

- Regular Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Survey (KAP) survey needs to be in place so that efficiency and effectiveness of the sessions conducted by the CSPs can be measured.
- In order to make the private service provision more sustainable, there should be a gradual withdrawal of fees from project (can be started from Livestock Service Provider) in turn helps to increase the demand of the service providers if really beneficiaries are benefited by them.
- The Agriculture Service Provider needs to acquire most updated knowledge and technology with changing needs of the people and market.

### **Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)**

- Since the working area of SEEDS project is in lack of potential formal job providers and project does not like to encourage migration, therefore “self-employment creation” would be the best options for economic empowerment of the disadvantaged women, youth and persons with disabilities and recommendations are made accordingly.

#### **On farm Sector**

- Considering market demand, easy access to raw materials, less investment as well as less time consuming training and finally keeping the environmental sustainability, the study team suggests the following skill training and value addition activities. The intended participants can avail these skills by attending training in nearby places and there are ample opportunities for establishing a buy back system with renowned private enterprises.
  - Diversified jute products are a preferred choice of global consumers due to its environment-friendly nature. Jute craft production such as making of floor mat, door mat, table mat, cushion covers, bag, Nakshi Shikia, etc.
  - Bamboo craft – stools, mats, baskets, fishing gear, traps, *Tala*, *Dali*, *Kula*, furniture as well as decorative items and show pieces.
  - Craft items using catkin grass /kashful (*Sacchuram spontaneum*) such as Tala, basket, Flower Vase etc. Catkins are widely grown in Char areas of Gaibandha, Jamalpur and Kurigram district.
  - Food processing can be promoted such as items making from ground nut, chilli, baby corn, corn flower and its marketing.
  - Milk processing and value addition by making Cheese, sweets, cards, *Chhana* etc. and link with regional and national market.
  - Hatching of Egg and Chick selling
  - Leather/hide Works (for both men and women of 2% Rabidas/Dalit community).

**However, some of the items may need further value chain analysis in order to make some value addition activities to make higher income potential. An organized market channel creation is a prerequisite.**

### **Non-Farm Sector**

Considering higher income and keeping market demand in center of thinking, and after triangulation of skills desire of participants particularly young men, young men and women with education the study team suggest the following potential self-enterprises

#### **for men with less education**

1. Plumbing
2. Tiles Fitting
3. Auto rickshaw/ easy bike servicing
4. Motor Cycle repairing
5. Rod Binding
6. Thai Aluminum works–for men
7. Gas oven, cooker and Micro Oven repairing-(men with disabilities with two able hand and eye, speech and hearing impaired also can do this).
8. Electric wiring- for men
9. Hair Dresser -for men and men with disabilities with two able hand and eye
10. Computer and IT-
11. Car driving–for men and women

**All Non-farm Training should be given from professional training service providing agencies, so that they can have a certificate. A certificate is always valuable either for self-employment or s/he wants to be migrant workers in abroad.**

### **Non potential Trade**

- Mobile phone Servicing is not a feasible options now a days since the phone sets and software are frequently changing and people are more interested to go to the service centers of that particular company. The chips are getting obsolete on frequent basis.
- Tailoring and hand stitching proved as non-viable options for income generation and should be avoided.

### **Trainee Selection for TVET:**

The study has tried to capture the experiences of different TVET training providers and found that the success of skills training is depended upon proper selection of trainees and it is fundamental. Therefore the SEEDS project can consider the following attributes during selection of potential trainees:

- A trainee who is really interested to receive training and go into profession of choice and has got the aptitude for such work as a business.
- Young men and women from comparatively vulnerable (needy) and poor households.
- The potential trainee must be unemployed within age bracket of 18-35 and not a running student.
- Education level can be maximum Higher Secondary level.
- The trainee will be eager to invest time and efforts to complete the courses
- They will be intend to work as apprentice (paid/unpaid) to selected shops/enterprises after completion of the training.
- The person who already gainfully employed should be excluded as they may ask for wage or income compensation.
- Special attention will be given to enroll persons with disabilities.

- Trainee selection would be in such a manner that it would not distort the market (3 to 4 trainees from a union for a specific skills) in case of skill selling trades. The list and particulars of potential trainees should get prior approval from SEEDS project.
- For craft skills, the participant selection would be in a way (cluster approach) that it produces bulk item together and have a linkage to the urban buyers by establishing as a collective (produce individually and sell collectively) at village level and follow a “buy back system”.

**Potential Trainees grouping for better uses of resources:**

Depending on socio-economic criteria and resource limitation of the project, the trainees can be divided in several sub-categories as follows:

- (i) The youth from disadvantaged households but have capacity to pay travel and incidental expenses for attending the training, the SSEEDS project may provide training fees at YTCs since the cost is comparatively lower than TTCs.
- (ii) The youth who are from extremely poor households are to be supported by the SEEDS project by contributing all costs (transportation, food, training fees including materials) whether in TTCs or YTCs or in other institutes at local union level. To get ownership on the training, a refundable security amount of BDT 500 can be taken from the participants, so that s/he is not dropped out.
- (iii) Persons with disabilities are supported free of costs along with care givers. Whole relevant cost would be borne by the SEEDS project.
- (iv) Persons with disabilities with minimum education or illiterate can be supported with different small business (grocery shops, egg hatching, and clothes business).

**Trainer/ Training service Provider Selection:** The objective of hiring training service providers (institutions) or *Ostad* is to build the demand based occupational skills of the targeted youths by competence based vocational training for employment creation. These trainings will facilitate self-employment *and/or giving placement in job market (home and abroad)*. Following are some considerations suggested for selecting the training service providers:

- Trainers selection need to be more professional manner who knows about the state laws, rules, security issues, etc. Specific checklist/characteristics and or guideline can be developed for selecting trainers for each trade need to be developed.
- Have knowledge on training-course content correspond to the need and demand of the job market (syllabus, trainers, and facilities) and fit to the trainee’s quality.
- Strong efforts of apprenticeship and job placement- the trainers must have link with the job providers and local entrepreneurs.
- In case of producing craft or other productions, the trainer should have strong backward and forward market linkage with establish market system.
- For institutions, should have national acceptance of providing quality trainings and have accreditation with Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB).
- The training service providers should have or ensure standard logistic and pleasant environmental facilities for training such as standard class rooms, physical and practical training facilities, hygienic residential; WASH and food facilities that should be approved by the SEEDS project.
- The service providers will ensure an efficient internal monitoring system of the training.

**Other considerable issues:**

- For women and persons with disabilities, proper physical, psychological and accessible environment must be ensured.
- The training providers will award training certificate printed on standard paper to all successful participants ceremonially (other than locally provided training on craft activities).



- The Partner NGO of SEEDS project may establish contract with the TTCs or YTC/ MAWTS/UCEP or their own facilities for the skills related to vocational sectors for the men such as Plumbing, Rod binding, Electrical wiring, Welding, Tiles fitting) as well as car driving (since BRTA are linked with TTC and harassment of getting license through TTC is less). The trainees will be agreeing to be residential during the training period in that case.
- Moreover, soft skills related to business operation, account keeping, safety-security of persons involved and for produces are very important issues and to be supported by SEEDS.
- Finally, the skill training service providers will design the course along with all training documents in Bengali so that the participants can understand those easily and prior to implementation, take approval from SEEDS project management.

#### D. Crosscutting issues

- The skill delivery and economic empowerment, issues of Persons with disabilities are less addressed and a deliberate effort need to be in place to make economically productive and address the inclusion into the accessibility and service process.
- To maintain 100% WaSH, the POs should take the lead for their respective villages following Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach particularly in Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Kurigram district.
- Transportation can be given to SRG members to participate in meeting during flood or other emergency period.

#### Implementation and Partnership Approach:

- The project field team should stay at the back of the SG, WC, and PO members and facilitate them so that the group/committee/organization members can do their activity and develop their capacity.
- The Partners Organizations' management needs to be more involved in the implementation process and worked following shared responsibility. This will increase the ownership of Partners NGOs in the project processes.
- It is envisage that more involvement of partners management during implementation of project activities enhance the quality and efficiency of the project. Thus joint visits can be performed with the SF management during quarterly progress review meetings at the project sites.

#### Need Synergy with other actors

- CARITAS successfully link the beneficiaries with other project of Caritas such as Trade School project of MAWTS, Automobile Engine maintenance and Industrial sewing machine operation (ISMO) training with certification. Caritas trade school project funded by Miserior contributes other money. General ratio is 13.65% from local community and 87% from project. It is good example of synergy and leverage. Other PNGOs also follow such approach in their context.
- GUK is active in the project area over last of years (10 years )through different project GUK prosperity project was earlier worked. GUK has involvement with group/village. In the same community, SONGO project of ICCO/RDRS. And SKS a local NGO is also working this on awareness aspects. A proper synergy was can be developed over there for better impact. Several project of US are also being implemented in the working area of SEEDS in Jamalpur. Only in Dewanganj, some synergy was done. Other areas, it was not expanded. RDRS could make synergy with its existing and past project support such as there is a purchase and sale center premises established by RDRS under "Growing together" project. There are huge infrastructure and agri-machinaries. Due to internal conflict, everything is now stopped for last 2 years. SEEDs project can utilize the infrastructure by resolving the conflict. In the same union, there is also federation of RDRS. After having all these mechanism and facilities, MTR do not suggest to form separate union apex under SEEDs as parallel platform in same union (Ranipukur). RDRS management is agreed that the union committee of SEEDs at union level can be the women wing of the already exists federation.
- There should be no parallel structure run by same PNGOs in same ward or union. It would create conflict. Rather establishing synergy would be a good option.

### **Monitoring and Follow Up**

- For quality outcome, monitoring on both qualitative and quantitative aspects are equally important. This is not only the job of Monitoring Officer. The POs (Education, Economic Inclusion) and Upazila Manager need to check the quality aspects of the implementation process in a professional manner.
- In order to ensure the quality outcome, the project should have activity-wise implementation guideline (detailed Implementation Plan) along with 3-5 key monitoring check-points. Before starting of implementation, the project staff needs to have orientation on activity implementation cycle along with key quality markers and follow-up check-points.
- The semi-annual and annual lessons learned session can be organized for further capacity building of field staff.

### **General recommendations**

- **Critical Mass:** For policy advocacy wider and united voice raise is a critical juncture to change the lagged situation. With existing programme only in 2-3 unions per Upazila is less significant in this regard. There is a need of horizontal (expansion to adjacent unions) and vertical (inclusion of new extreme poor members) expansion of programme for a greater voice towards effective advocacy at Upazilla & district level as well to be a real community based organization.
- **Staff capacity building:** training is required for staff and group leaders – Process facilitation for self-propelling organization development, institutionalization of tools & practices, commercial village development strategy linkage establishment, networking, advocacy, tapping of resources & services.
- Project team need basic orientation on disability for dealing with persons/children with disabilities and inclusion in various project activities’
- Organizing exposure visits for PO leaders and Staff on successful apex of poor beneficiaries which can enhance the confidence.
- English term and Jargon are widely used by the group members and CSPs. Sometimes community people and weak members of the project do not understand the jargon. Suitable Bangla word needs to be introduced. Similarly the Ward Committee, CRC and PO, the same structure of Ward level platform is used and creates confusion. one name can be used.
- The PNGO staff requested to the authority for exploring the provision of a community Volunteer to support field staff since workload of staff is high as the PNGO staff requested.
- The PNGO staff feels that the signing of MoU can be between partner NGO and Private sector instead with SRG and PO and private sector for output product sale and input supply.
- The PNGO staff requested to provide support for fuel, lubricants and maintenance cost for the motor cycle used by staff for the project purpose. Staff would like to buy their motor cycles since at present no staff are using bi-cycles. The cost can be covered from maintenance of bi-cycle line item.
- The PNGOs suggested for budget for some campaign events are very low. (student council, mother gathering, day observation, etc.) which can be enhanced.
- The PNGOs suggested for a staff position post “Trainer cum Communication Officer” can be created for smooth function of the project activities as proposed by the partner NGOs.
- The PNGOs have suggested to stop book collection campaign using Student council.
- The PNGOs suggested for not to go for develop Upazila level CSP forum and TVET forum
- Similarly they suggested to stop conducting linkage meeting with MFI since the MFIs are already active and almost all BHHS have access to loan from MFI.
- Partner NGO staff also suggested to stop linkage meeting with Union Parishad and focal person since it is not effective.

## 8. Conclusion

The team conducted the mid-term review of the SEEDS in a participatory approach. The SEEDS has been found relevant and effective in realizing some of the basic needs of the poor households. The SEEDS has also created positive impact specially in developing knowledge of women and adolescent girls about their rights and life skills. Project also ensured the government safety net services and facilities for some poor women. Project has been educating children which will have long term impacts in the community. The quality of implementing process need further improvement particularly for self-reliance process. The capacity and strength of small groups, PO /WCs and Union committee need serious thought about their distinct role and differentiated values for supporting the member of POs and SRGs so that the remote members cannot leave behind from their services. The Partner NGOs and Staff need more conceptual clarity on self-help approach and how to sustain the activities after withdrawal of the objectives to the expected extent at the time of evaluation.

The Midterm study findings and recommendations hopefully would contribute to improve the condition of vulnerable people through improvisation of the implementation process of the project. The management and project implementation team hopefully will prioritize the issues, develop plan to materialize the feasible recommendations within the project framework and undertake necessary interventions. Staff should not run after just for result in any way, they need to work for qualitative change of the work style and implementation methodologies which automatically generate good or expected results.

