

Draft Report

**Impact Assessment of UC Based Poverty
Reduction Program (UCBPRP)**

Implemented by SRSO

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Executive Summary

This report is based on the Impact Assessment of the Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Program (UCBPRP) conducted by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) at the behest of Sind Rural Support Organization (SRSO). The exercise was conducted in the Shikarpur and Kashmore-Kandhkot districts of Sindh, to determine the impact of the UCBPR.

The UCBPRP implemented a series of interventions based on the results of a Poverty Score Card (PSC) survey piloted in 2009. Through the results of the PSC survey results individual were classified under four poverty categories that determined their need for intervention.

SRSO conducted the PSC survey in 87 union councils of Shikarpur and Kashmore-Kandhkot and has thus far surveyed 265,802 House Holds (HHs). As part of the UCBPRP SRSO had organized 182,651 households into 10,556 Community Organizations (CO), which in turn provided 3,483 members for the formation of Village Organizations (VO). These Village Organizations were clustered into 27 Local Support Organizations (LSO) with 64 members in total.

To conduct the impact exercise of the UCBPRP, SDPI was provided with a list of all the beneficiaries in the 85 Union Councils and 7 Tehsils of, Shikarpur and Kashmore-Kandhkot where the intervention was conducted. The evaluation exercise was conducted in 7 tehsils and 17 UCs covering 20% of the area targeted by the UCBPRP. Out of the 17 UCs surveyed, 10 are from Shikarpur and 7 from Kashmore-Kandhkot. In the context of 2010 floods in UCBPRP operational area, 10 non-flood, 6 flood-affected and one partly-affected UC were also selected for evaluation. A total of 547 beneficiaries from 17 UCs were selected for this exercise.

The key findings of the study suggest that a total of 414 (76.38%) beneficiaries came out of their initial poverty bands and moved to higher categories. Only 40 (7.38%) were living under the 'extremely poor' category, while 88 (16.24%) remained in the 'chronically poor' category. 116 (21.40%) moved the next band of 'transitory poor' and 298 (54.98%) became 'non-poor'

The magnitude of the impact observed from the evaluation while positive and encouraging is anomalous for a development project. The results could be attributed to biases in the weights assigned to certain question on the Poverty Score Cards. It is recommended that a review of the survey tool be conducted to ensure an accurate assessment of the program. Also keeping in view these results it is strongly recommended to carry out more comprehensive and broad-based impact assessment of the Program that uses more rigorous tools than the PSC for targeted and sector-wise interventions under UCBPRP in the future. However based on the overall positive results it is recommended that the UCBPRP be continued further to protect all three poverty bands.

Background

The Government of Sind launched the Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Program (UCBPRP) on February 1st, 2009. Sind Rural Support Organization (SRSO) was given the task of implementing this program in Shikarpur and Kandhkot-Kashmore. The program was launched with a budget of PKR 2.9 Billion for a pilot phase of 30 months. Interruptions in the implementation of the project due to flooding led to an extension of the programme for another year.

The UCBRP program was based on two key components, targeting the poor and social mobilization. For the former it is critical to first identify the poor, and those that are often overlooked by welfare schemes. The method adopted for this purpose by SRSO, was the Poverty Score Card (PSC), a World Bank approved assessment tool that assigns a score to individuals that allows an assessment of their poverty status. Four Poverty bands are defined based on those scores. The cards contain 12 questions related to household assets, family size, and educational details, with no explicit questions regarding income. The questions are listed below.

1. How many people in the household are under the age of 18 or over the age of 65?
2. What is the highest education level of the head of the household (completed)?
3. How many children in household between 5 to 16 years old are currently attending school?
4. How many rooms per person does the household own?
5. What kind of toilet does the household use?
6. Does the own at least one refrigerator, freezer or washing machine?
7. Does the household own at least one air conditioner, air cooler, geyser or heater?
8. Does the household own at least one cooking stove, cooking range or microwave oven?
9. Does the household own the following engine driven vehicles? (List provided)
10. Does the household own at least one TV?
11. Does the household own the following livestock? (List provided)
12. How much agricultural land does the household own?

Poverty scores are calculated using predetermined scores and weights for each question depending on the answer given by the interviewee. The scores range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 100, with lower scores indicating higher poverty. The categories are designated as follows.

- I. 'Extremely Poor' are households whose score on the PSC is between 0 and 11.
- II. 'Chronically Poor' are households whose score on the PSC is between 12 and 18.
- III. 'Transitory Poor' are households whose score on the PSC is between 19 and 23.
- IV. 'Non-Poor' are households whose score on the PSC is between 24 and 100

SRSO conducted the PSC survey in 87 union councils of Shikarpur and Kashmore-Kandhkot and has thus far surveyed 265,802 House Holds (HHs). While this first component established who the beneficiaries of the program would be the second, i.e. Social Mobilization plays a key role in defining how the program would be implemented. The key interventions of the UCBRP were implemented through the Community Organizations and Village Organizations set up by SRSO. This strategy was adopted to make the program sustainable. Including the beneficiaries in the implementation process, ensure that they play a key role in their own poverty reduction and can maintain their improved status after SRSO's involvement ends. Additionally by having their own organizations, the communities would be able to voice their concerns more effectively with relevant stakeholder bodies such as Provincial and District Governments, Taluka and Union Administrations etc. Eventually, it is envisaged that these Village Organizations will be able to develop their own linkages with external organizations in order to cater for their needs.

For the purpose of social mobilization SRSO had organized 182,651 households into 10,556 Community Organizations (CO), through which 3,483 members were made available for the formation of Village Organizations (VO). These Village Organizations were clustered into 27 Local

Support Organizations (LSO) with 64 members in total. The members of these organizations have received training on management skills both at the village and community level.

The SRSO staff provided the communities with the support required for social mobilization and training to the COs and VO of the rural support products to be implemented under the UCBRP. The use of these products by the beneficiaries is dictated by their PSC i.e. different categories enable a household to receive different products.

Identifying and mobilizing the community was followed by a series of intervention strategies with the purpose of uprooting the beneficiaries from the poverty trap. The implementation strategies adopted by the program included the following.

Income Generating Grants (In Kind/Non-Cash)

To facilitate the poorest segments of society that may not be able to pay back even the smallest loans Income Generating Grants (IGG) were designed to allow these households to purchase productive assets. Eligible households received an in-kind/non-cash grant of up to PKR 20,000 for the purchase of income generating assets that were mostly used for livestock such as goats, cows buffaloes and productive tools and inputs. There was an attempt to target women for this intervention.

Community Investment Fund (CIF)

The Community Investment Fund was instituted through the Village Organizations established by SRSP. Each VO was given a revolving fund for giving out small loans to the women of impoverished households. The size of the loan fund varied depending on the number of 'extremely poor' and 'chronically poor' households identified in the area, with Rs. 25,000 allotted for every identified household. This program went beyond the IGC by building the capacity of the beneficiaries of the program as the CIF was managed by rural women. They decided who the recipients of the loans would be and what the terms of the loan would be. The aim of the programme was to not only to provide funds for the purchase of income generating assets but also for the capacity building of the beneficiaries. By creating a stable institutional mechanism for the disbursement of loan funds the program creates.

The UCBPRP includes a scholarship for vocational training. One young person from a chronically poor household is selected as a recipient of a scholarship for vocational training. The type of training is determined based on an assessment conducted during consultations between the recipient, their household and the Village Organization (VO).

Community Physical Infrastructures (CPIs): This project component centers on improving existing infrastructure in villages and adding necessary new fixtures. CPIs are development infrastructure projects, which are carried out with the help of organized communities. Installation of hand-pumps, and maintenance of small local roads are some of the elements of the CPI initiative. The labor used for the construction of the CPI will be sourced from 'extremely poor' and 'chronically poor' households of the village, with market-based wages being provided. As a result, CPIs will not only serve to improve the village, but will also provide much-needed employment opportunities for the village workforce.

Education: In response to the finding of a situation analysis conducted prior to the programs implementation, the Government of Sindh recognized the value of education as a tool for challenging inequalities and poverty. Therefore major improvements to the school systems of the target areas are required. For this purpose Seven (7) School Management Committees have been formed as per guidelines provided by the Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh for a programme that will be implemented in 300 schools of selected UCs. The project aimed at improving the Primary School enrolment by making 300 non-functional schools functional in addition to the establishment of 100 second-shift primary schools for girls. School feeding programme were to be introduced in two union councils. The activities for this project started in October 2009 and work is underway to meet the targets.

Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA): UCBPRP has started the TBA training programme to improve maternal evaluation and child health and as a part of the safe motherhood initiatives. Under this project traditional birth attendants would be educated on safe birthing processes through 10 days of extensive training which would include lessons on preventing post-partum sepsis by applying “three clean” during delivery and following placenta management procedures.

Micro Health Insurance: In October 2009, Adamjee Insurance Company in collaboration with the Rural Support Program introduced a Micro Health Family Insurance product for underprivileged households covering parents, children under 18 years and unmarried sisters. The micro health insurance acts as a social safety net to the poorest households. The service package with a ceiling of RS.25000/ per person per year includes OPD, day care, diagnostic services, hospitalization and maternity care. The package also includes accident coverage, disability compensation and financial support of a sum of Rs.25000/ for funeral charges in case of death of the head of the household.

Methodology

To conduct an evaluation of the UCBRP SDPI was tasked with conducting new PSC surveys The analysis centered around comparing 2009 PSC results against those from field surveys in 2012. For this purpose SDPI was provided with a list of all beneficiaries across all UCs villages and the beneficiaries in Shikarpur and Kahsmore-Kandhkot districts where the programme was implemented. Of the total beneficiaries 20% were randomly selected for the impact assessment exercise. The evaluation covered 2 districts, 7 tehsils and 17 union councils. Out of the 17 UCs, 10 were from Shikarpur and 7 from Kashmore-Kandhkot. In the context of 2010 floods in UCBPRP operational area, 10 non-flood, 6 flood-affected and one partly-affected UC were also selected. 542 beneficiaries were selected from these districts for the assessment, with each having received the benefits from atleast one intervention T of the UCBRP programme. The selection of is beneficiaries by district, UC and Taluka is summarized below.

Table 1 Number of UCs and beneficiaries included in the assessment

S#	District	Taulka	UC	Status	Number of Beneficiaries
1	Shikarpur	Garhi Yasin	Dakhan	Non-Flood	41
2			Amrote	Non-Flood	27
3		Khanpur	Pir Bux Shujrah	Flood Affected	22
4			Zarkhail	Flood Affected	22
5			Mian Sahib	Flood Affected	22
6		Lakhi	Taib	Partly Affected	40
7			Bhirkan	Non-Flood	46
8			Mungrani	Non-Flood	30
9		Shikarpur	Humayun	Flood Affected	43
10			Janno	Non-Flood	26
	Total				324
1	Kashmore-Kandhkot	Kandhkot	Akhero	Non-Flood	7
2			Daulatpur	Non-Flood	44
3			Dari	Flood-Affected	37
4		Kashmore	Bakhshapur	Non-Flood	38
5			Kashmore Colony	Non-Flood	34
6			Rasool Bakhsh	Non-Flood	31
7		Tangwani	Tangwani	Flood-Affected	27
	Total				218
	Grand Total				542

At the request of the SRSO board, a revalidation exercise was also carried out to reinforce the assessment findings. SDPI teams were re-mobilized to resurvey a selected sample of around 180 beneficiaries. All the data gathered was again cleaned and reentered in the specially designed software provided by SRSO, which is specially designed to calculate the household PSC scores of the target sample.

Poverty Score Cards outlined above were the principal evaluation methodology for the study that was conducted by a team of 42 experienced field enumerators, selected by SDPI. Several team members had previously worked on SRSO process reviews, and PCS surveys and were therefore familiar with the tenants of the UCBRP project. In addition a two-day training session was conducted for the field enumerators to familiarize them with the basic concepts of the UCBPRP and the PSC

process. During the training the enumerators were made to fill out sample questionnaires that were evaluated on site to give immediate feedback on their performance.

The field enumerators were divided in 14 teams, comprising of 3 members working in conjunction with a SRSO representative, added solely for facilitation purposes. A different team was sent to each district every day to ensure impartiality to the data collected. Each team was given a daily target of 16 household interviews from three different villages.

The results of the PSC surveys conducted by the SDPI team were then compared with the results from the 2009 survey. SRSO had developed software for the analysis of the PSC survey data that was made available to SDPI to analyze the 2012 data. Using this analysis against the 2009 data provided by SRSO, the programme was evaluated to see the movement of the selected beneficiaries between poverty bands from 2009 to 2012.

Details of the 2009 Poverty Score Card results by district and Union Council of the sample selected by SDPI are outlined below.

According to 2009 score of selected beneficiaries, 430 (79.34%) were living under the 'extremely poor' condition, while 112 (20.66%) were falling under the category of 'chronically poor'. No beneficiary was classified as 'transitory poor' or 'non-poor', indicating a severe need for intervention.

Key Findings

Following PSC survey conducted by SDPI of the selected beneficiaries, significant shifts in poverty status are observed with a large proportion of people moving to the transitory poor and non-poor status, a condition which was previously unobserved in the sample. The results of the survey are summarized below.

Table 3: PSC score of the selected beneficiaries in 2012

District	Taulka	UC	Status	Total	Score Range			
					0-11	12--18	19-23	24-100
Kashmore-Kandhkot	Kandhkot	Akehro	Non Flood	7	0	5	2	0
Kashmore-Kandhkot	Kandhkot	Daulatpur	Non Flood	44	6	16	6	16
Kashmore-Kandhkot	Kandhkot	Darri	Flood	37	6	9	8	14
Kashmore-Kandhkot	Kashmore	Bakhshapur	Non Flood	38	2	7	13	16

Kashmore-Kandhkot	Kashmore	Colony	Non Flood	34	3	3	10	18
Kashmore-Kandhkot	Kashmore	R B Chachar	Non Flood	31	6	3	5	17
Kashmore-Kandhkot	Tangwani	Tangwani	Flood	27	1	9	6	11
Total	3	7		218	24	52	50	92
%				100	11.01	23.85	22.94	42.20
Shikarpur	Garhi yasin	Amrote	Non Flood	27	0	2	3	22
Shikarpur	Garhi yasin	Dakhan	Non Flood	41	0	4	12	25
Shikarpur	Khanpur	Mian Sahib	Flood	27	0	2	7	18
Shikarpur	Khanpur	P B Shujrah	Flood	22	2	0	3	17
Shikarpur	Khanpur	Zarkhail	Flood	22	2	1	5	14
Shikarpur	Lakhi	Bhirkan	Non Flood	46	1	5	4	36
Shikarpur	Lakhi	Mungrani	Non Flood	30	0	4	4	22
Shikarpur	Lakhi	Taib	Partly Affected	40	0	3	10	27
Shikarpur	Shikarpur	Humayun	Flood	43	7	8	12	16
Shikarpur	Shikarpur	Janno	Non Flood	26	4	7	6	9
Total	4	10		324	16	36	66	206
%				100	4.94	11.11	20.37	63.58

Grand Total	7	17		542	40	88	116	298
%				100	7.38	16.24	21.40	54.98

According to 2012 scores of the selected beneficiaries, only 40 individuals (7.38%) continued living under 'extremely poor' conditions, while 88 (16.24%) were left in the 'chronically poor' category. 116 (21.40%) had to the moved the next band labeled 'transitory poor' and staggering 298 (54.98%) had moved to the 'non-poor'. A total of 414 (76.38%) beneficiaries came out of the basic poverty bands and moved to the higher categories.

Comparative analysis of 2009 baseline data with 2012 findings

Table 4: Status of UCBPRP Beneficiaries

Category	Poverty Score	Status in 2009	Status in 2012
Extremely Poor	0 - 11	430 (79.33%)	40 (7.38%)
Chronically Poor	12 - 18	112 (20.66%)	88 (16.23%)
Transitory Poor	19 - 23	0 (0)	116 (21.40%)
Non-Poor	24 - 100	0 (0)	298 (54.98%)
Total		542 (100%)	542 (100%)

If the results are compared with the baseline data of 2009, a total of 40 (7.38%) beneficiaries remained in the 'extremely poor' category compared to the 430 found in the previous study. 88 (16.23%) beneficiaries were found in the 'chronically poor category' compared with 112 in 2009. In making this comparison it is important to note that the change in the composition of individuals falling into this poverty band can be attributed to people moving out of this category into higher categories, and from people moving into this range from the 'extremely poor' category. While there were no beneficiaries in the 'transitory poor' and non-poor categories in 2009, a total of 116 (21.40%) and 298 (54.98%) beneficiaries were elevated to the transitory poor and non-poor categories, respectively.

Status of Beneficiaries by District

Table 6: Status of UCBPRP Beneficiaries of Shikarpur district

Category	Poverty Score	Status in 2009	Status in 2012 (%)
Extremely Poor	0 - 11	264 (81%)	16 (5%)
Chronically Poor	12 - 18	60 (19%)	36 (11%)
Transitory Poor	19 - 23	0 (0)	66 (20%)
Non-Poor	24 - 100	0 (0)	206 (64%)
Total		324 (100%)	324 (100%)

If the results are compared with the baseline data of 2009 in Shikarpur, a total of 16 (5%) beneficiaries remained in the 'extremely poor' category compared with 264 in the baseline year. 36

(11%) beneficiaries were in the chronically poor category in 2012 compared with 60 in 2009. A total of 66 (20%) and 206 (64%) beneficiaries had been elevated to the transitory poor and non-poor categories, respectively. None of the beneficiaries studied for the evaluation had been in either category in 2009. A detailed breakdown of the results based on Taulkas are presented below.

Table 7: Status of UCBPRP Beneficiaries of Taulkas in Shikarpur

Category	Poverty Score	Garhi Yasin		Khanpur		Lakhi		Shikarpur	
		2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012
Extremely Poor	0 – 11	46	0	55	4	108	1	55	11
Chronically Poor	12 – 18	22	6	16	3	8	12	14	15
Transitory Poor	19 – 23	0	15	0	15	0	18	0	18
Non-Poor	24 – 100	0	47	0	49	0	85	0	25
Total		68	68	71	71	116	116	69	69

Table 8: Status of UCBPRP Beneficiaries of Kashmore-Kandhkot district

Category	Poverty Score	Status in 2009	Status in 2012
Extremely Poor	0 - 11	166 (76%)	24 (11%)
Chronically Poor	12 - 18	52 (24%)	52 (24%)
Transitory Poor	19 - 23	0	50 (23%)
Non-Poor	24 – 100	0	92 (42%)
Total		218 (100%)	218 (100%)

The results observed in Kashmore-Kandhkot exhibit the same overall pattern, with a significant drop in the number of “Extremely poor” individuals offset by a rise in the number of ‘transitory poor’ and ‘non-poor’ individuals. A total of 24 people remained in the extremely poor category out of the 166 observed in 2009. The number of chronically poor people stayed constant at 52 for both years. 50 people had come up to the ‘transitory poor’ status, while 92 individuals in the district had been pulled to the ‘non-poor’ bracket.

Table 9: Status of UCBPRP Beneficiaries of Taulkas in Kashmore-Kandhkot district

Category	Poverty Score	Kandhkot		Kashmore		Tangwani	
		2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012
Extremely Poor	0 – 11	44	12	99	11	23	1
Chronically Poor	12 – 18	44	30	4	13	4	9
Transitory Poor	19 – 23	0	16	0	28	0	6
Non-Poor	24 - 100	0	30	0	51	0	11
Total		88	88	103	103	27	27

Table 9: Status of Beneficiaries in Non-Flood and Flood-Affected UCs

Category	Poverty Score	Non-Flood UCs		Flood-Affected UCs		Partly-Affected	
		2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012
Extremely Poor	0 - 11	250 (77%)	22 (7%)	142 (79%)	18 (10%)	38 (95%)	0 (0%)
Chronically Poor	12 - 18	74 (23%)	56 (17%)	36 (21%)	29 (16%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)
Transitory Poor	19 - 23	0 (0%)	65 (20%)	0 (0%)	41 (23%)	0 (0%)	10 (25%)
Non-Poor	24 - 100	0 (0%)	181 (56%)	0 (0%)	90 (51%)	0 (0%)	27 (83%)
Total		324	324	178	178	40	40

Examining the results in the context of 2010 floods, impact assessment results suggests that 90 (51%) beneficiaries were elevated to the non-poor category, while 41 (23%) moved to the transitory poor category in flood-affected union councils of the target area. 29 (16%) and 18 (10%) remained in the chronically poor and extremely poor categories, respectively. Similarly, in one UC which was

partly affected in 2010 floods, 27 (83%) beneficiaries moved to the non-poor category, while 10 (25%) beneficiaries fell in the transitory poor category.

Conclusion

In summary, based solely on the results of the PSC survey results, it appears that the UCBPRP has had wide spread effects on the poverty levels of the intervention areas of Shikarpur and Kashmore-Kandhkot. The results of the survey though promising and optimistic are of a magnitude that is unprecedented for development projects. There is therefore a probability that the results of the survey may be skewed by certain biases in the Poverty Score Card tool. Weightage assigned to certain questions may influence the results by over or under emphasizing the impact of an intervention. Therefore it is recommended that a review of the analysis mechanism of the survey tool is conducted to ensure unbiased results. Additionally it is also suggested that a more rigorous empirical impact assessment methodology is adopted to evaluate the results of this program. Additionally a more detailed analysis of the factors that alter the poverty status of the beneficiaries is required to further develop the programme to be a viable and sustainable solution for poverty reduction in Sindh. Some more specific recommendations are listed below.

Recommendations

- * A more comprehensive and broad-based impact assessment is required for targeted and sector-wise interventions in future under UCBPRP
- * A review of the poverty score card tool is required to ensure
- * There is a need to determine internal and external factors behind 55% came out of poverty bands and moved to the non-poor category and 45% remained poor and transitory poor.
- * Keeping in view the positive impacts of both non-flood and disaster-related interventions, UCBPRP may be continued further to protect all three poverty bands.
- * There is a need to monitor the beneficiaries who have shifted to the 'non-poor' category based on the PSC survey results to ensure that they remain in the new category. There is a possibility that they may be excluded from future SRSO interventions as part of a phase-out strategy. Different programs may be designed to target the 'non-poor' category.
- * Since social mobilization is a major factor besides financial assistance to alleviate poverty and empower women, it needs more focus investments.
- * A Comprehensive Study needs to be conducted to determine the soft impacts of the program.
- * There is a need to conduct communication audit of the programme in order to devise comprehensive communication strategy to reach out beneficiaries in an effective manner.
- * Also, need to record success stories, where beneficiaries have benefitted from UCBPRP interventions in particular and the whole community in general.
- * An empirical study also needs to be conducted to determine the role of external factors in overall increase in the poverty score. These programmes can be like Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and other government sector flood and non-flood related interventions.