



Implemented in Collaboration with the Local Government and Rural Development Department, Government of Balochistan

Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme

NEWSLETTER

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PREPARED BY THE RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES NETWORK (RSPN)

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNER



Presenting Evidence from the Field on Community-Driven Development to Policy Makers in Balochistan



INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP

During 2021, BRACE Programme has carried out two research studies. The second wave of a longitudinal study on Poverty Dynamics, Inclusive Development and Women Empowerment in Balochistan and Community Livelihood Enhancement through Community Investment Fund (CIF), Income Generating Grant (IGG) and Technical and Vocational Educational Skills Training (TVET) to poor households in Balochistan.

To disseminate the findings and recommendations of the study, Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) in coordination with the EU Technical Assistant, Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) organised a provincial level Advocacy Workshop on 7th December 2021 in Serena Hotel Quetta, Pakistan.

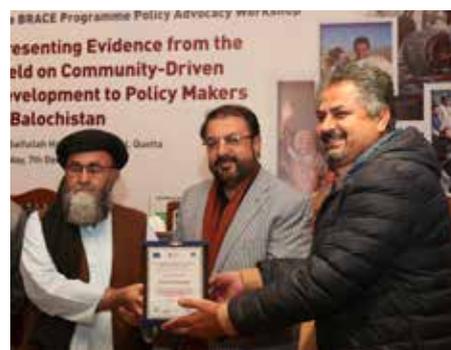
PARTICIPANTS

Over 124 participants from development organisations, academia, civil society, media, representatives from the National Assembly and Provincial Assembly, the Federal Government and the

Government of Balochistan attended the workshop and deliberated on the development of the province. Experts such as Dr Tariq Hussain and Mr Zafar ul Hasan (working as Joint Chief Economist at Planning Commission of Pakistan) presented the findings and championed policy recommendations from the studies and shared further insights.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

1. Strengthening stakeholders' understanding and ownership of the Programme,
2. Providing evidence-based recommendations to help the federal and provincial governments' stakeholders including government officials, political parties and policy makers to get informed about the dynamics of poverty at household level,
3. Women empowerment situation in Balochistan.
4. Provide evidence to scale-up community driven development approaches for poverty reduction.
5. Advocacy for local development policy framework





RESEARCH STUDY 1

Wave II of Participatory Action Research (PAR) on Dynamics of Household poverty, and Inclusive Development in Balochistan with a focus on Women’s Empowerment under EU funded BRACE Programme

Mr Zafar ul Hasan, presented the findings of wave II of the Participatory Action Research report titled ‘Dynamics of Household Poverty and Inclusive Development in Balochistan with a focus on Women Development’.

INTRODUCTION

Dynamics of household poverty and inclusive development in Balochistan with a focus on women’s empowerment is a longitudinal study which spans over three waves conducted in three

districts of Balochistan, i.e. Loralai, Khuzdar and Kech. It was planned under the participatory action research component of the research framework of the European Union (EU) Funded, BRACE programme. It has been outsourced to Momentum Ventures Pvt Ltd.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this research study is to assess, report and disseminate evidence-based findings

regarding poverty dynamics in Balochistan province.

FINDINGS ON DYNAMICS OF HOUSEHOLD POVERTY IN BALOCHISTAN

1. Poverty Push and Pull Factors

A major key finding from wave II reports that there has been an 8% decrease of people in poor category that is (0-23) poverty score, consequently 8% increase in the non-poor (0-24) band.

POVERTY PUSH FACTORS

	Total	
	Wave-I	Wave-II
Unemployment/ under employment	51%	29%
Large family size	37%	16%
Illiteracy/ Lack of Skills	29%	6%
Less income	23%	34%
Loans	23%	32%
Health expenses	20%	36%
Higher Inflation	17%	34%
COVID-19	0%	10%

POVERTY PULL FACTORS

	Total	
	Wave-I	Wave-II
Govt. supported social safety net	14.09%	10.1%
Social Support System	11.31%	4.1%
Human Resources Development	9.3%	20.2%
Loan Completely Returned	4.7%	2.8%
Started small business	3.83%	6.0%
Women Employment	3.4%	6.0%

Further detailed assessment of poverty dynamics was achieved by examining all dimensions such as physical, social, human, financial and environmental in order to identify the poverty related pull and push factors. The research reports that impact of poverty push factors such as dependency ratio, under employment and lack of skills have reduced significantly over the past year. It further reports human resource development, women employment and small scale business set up as major contributors in pulling people out of poverty. It can be argued that both the findings complement each other and the positive contribution to poverty pull factors such as interventions like women empowerment through participation in community groups, provision of vocational skills, and

provision of monetary aid for starting small businesses has contributed to change.

On the other hand, the negative impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods has been reported during wave II. Health expenses, inflation, decrease in income, added loans are the factors have significantly contributed to pushing people in to poverty. Government supported social safety net and social support system have reported to be reduced in the past year which have also contributed in making the beneficiaries further vulnerable. These findings reflect the impact of macro level policy interventions at the household level.

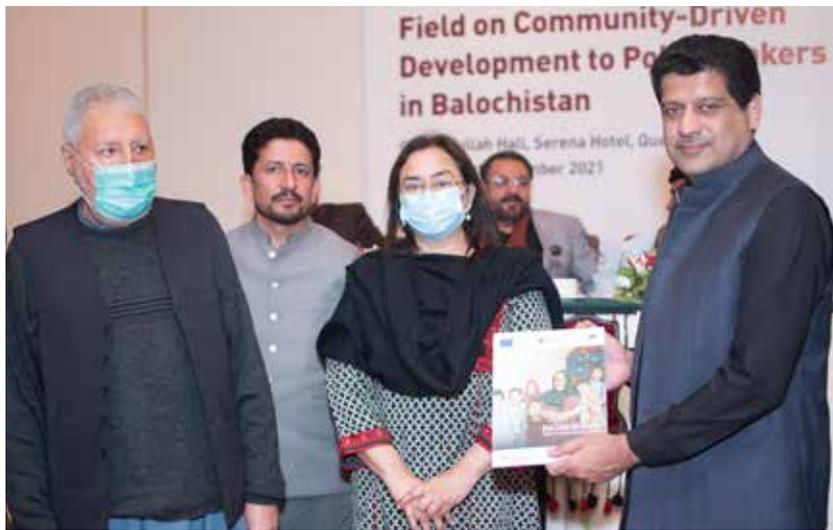
2. Women Empowerment

The findings were presented in comparison to findings from wave I

to reflect the state of change. Women empowerment indicators under the study have been divided into 4 categories. 'Power from within'; this includes self-esteem, self-confidence and personal autonomy. There has been a positive change in this aspect in districts Khuzdar and Kech but not in Loralai. The second category is 'power to'; this includes access to information, household decision making, financial literacy and influence in governing Community Institutions (CI's). This indicator also reflects a positive change in two districts except in Loralai. The third indicator is 'power with' which includes variables like social capital, participation in CI's and support from groups. It shows similar findings as the other two indicators. The fourth indicator is 'power over' which includes political participation and influence in governing CI's; there has been no change in these indicators in the past year. It further includes men's support of women rights and change in attitude and beliefs inside household, there has improvement against these variables, except in Loralai. Khuzdar is the only district where positive change is reported in belief of community leaders for women access to courts.

3. Comparative Changes in the state of Inclusive Development

The study also compared indicators of inclusive development. These include social inclusion, inclusion of physical resources and political inclusion. These are short-term, intermediate and long-term changes respectively. The study indicates improvement in social inclusion and minor improvement in physical resources. However, no change in political inclusion because it is a long-term change and its impact can only be seen over time.



RESEARCH STUDY 2

Community Livelihood Enhancement through CIF, IGG's and TVET for poor household in Balochistan

Dr Tariq Hussain represented Institute of Public Opinion Research (IPOR) which conducted the study titled 'Community Livelihood Enhancement through CIF, IGG and TVET for Poor Households in Balochistan'.

INTRODUCTION

RSPN commissioned a thematic/sectoral study in the first half of 2021 through IPOR Consulting Pvt. Limited to assess three main household-based interventions extended to female and male members of COs: income-generating grants (IGGs), interest-free loans from the revolving community investment fund (CIF), and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

OBJECTIVES

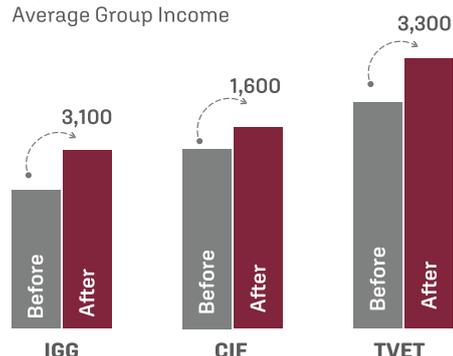
The overarching objective of the study was to assess outcomes and livelihood impacts related to the above-mentioned interventions from 2018-2021.

KEY FINDINGS/RESULTS

Impact on Household Income

In terms of income: (a) IGG beneficiaries reported an average increase in income (net of cost) of PKR 3,100 per month, which is the equivalent of 23 percent of their average monthly household income;

Impact of Interventions on Income
Average Group Income



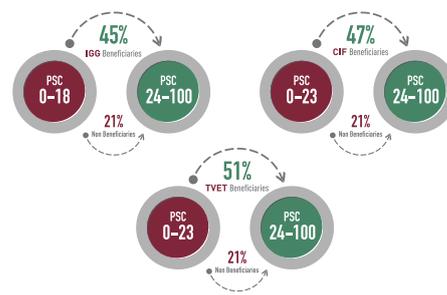
(b) CIF beneficiaries reported an average increase in income of PKR 1,600 per month (11 percent of their average monthly household income); and, (c) TVET beneficiaries reported an average increase in income of PKR 3,300 per month (16 percent of their average monthly household income

Change in Poverty Score

Beneficiary households, as well as the comparison groups, moved from poor to non-poor PSC categories during this period. there is consistent evidence of the positive household-level impact of BRACE across the three interventions (IGGs, CIF and TVET). This has generated significant contributions to the wellbeing of the poor in times of severe hardship.

Increased Mobility of Women

The main uses of net income by the beneficiaries were expenditures



Graduation, IGGs, CIF, and TVET beneficiaries from higher to lower poverty categories

on food, clothes, health care and children's education. Qualitative evidence from female and male beneficiary focus groups consistently pointed to several specific ways in which beneficiary income helped improve food consumption for all household members including children, access to health care, and children's education. There is also some evidence of increased mobility of female beneficiaries.

3RD MEETING

BRACE Programme's Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

The third RAC meeting convened on 1st November 2021. The aim of the research component of the BRACE Programme is to ensure that 'evidence based policy recommendations are generated and disseminated to support the Community-Led Local Governance (CLLG) Policy Framework'. Research component of the BRACE Programme is implemented by RSPN and DAI and they are supported by the Balochistan Rural Support Programme, the National Rural Support Programme, and Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Department, Government of Balochistan. The RAC serves as an advisory body for the research activities conducted under

the BRACE Programme and to suggest pathways to make the research directly relevant to the development policy and practice in Balochistan, in particular improvement in the local governance. The RAC and the research team of BRACE-RSPN work in close collaboration to enrich the planned research with contemporary development theory and practice.

Key Decisions taken during the Meeting

1. The ToRs of the study on Citizen-State linkages would include questions on the informal/indigenous linkages mechanisms in rural communities, and how CIs

use formal/informal institutions/actors to foster linkages.

2. The ToRs of the CPI assessment study would clearly state the scope as the assessment of outcomes. The quality of construction and other aspects already covered in a

report by Technical Advisor of the EU would not be part of the scope.

3. Community and concerned government departments' perception about the outcomes of CPIs would be one of the questions in the survey.

4. The ToRs would include the impact of CPI on socio-economic wellbeing of women.

5. The timelines for the studies would be developed task-wise and strictly observed.

Print Media Coverage of BRACE Programme's Policy Advocacy Event



Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives Engineer Zamrak Khan's Visit to Killa Abdullah

BRACE Programme with the financial assistance of European Union upheld a ceremony in Killa Abdullah to distribute assistive devices to Persons With Special Needs (PWSNs) and Income Generating Grants (IGGs) to the poor community members. These grants aim to alleviate poverty at household level and enable these beneficiaries to earn a sustainable livelihood. Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives Engineer Zamrak Khan graced the event as Chief Guest, other Guests of Honor were Assistant Commissioner-Subhan Saleem and Risaldar Major Levies-Zainullah Khan. Guests applauded BRSP's efforts in Killa Abdullah to make an inclusive society and rural development.



Ambassador of the European Union in Pakistan, Her Excellency Androulla Kaminara's Visit to BRACE Districts in Balochistan

"Rural development is a strategic priority area for the European Union in its engagement with Pakistan," remarked Ambassador of the European Union in Pakistan Her Excellency Androulla Kaminara. She met with the rural communities in Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP head office in Quetta under the EU-Funded Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment (BRACE) Programme.

This Programme is working to improve the access and quality of basic public services, reduce socio-economic inequalities, and create sustainable livelihood opportunities by bringing together rural communities and local governments.

A distribution ceremony of assistive devices to persons with special needs (PWSN) to foster a more inclusive and progressive society was held in Quetta. Honourable Deputy Speaker of Balochistan Assembly Sardar Babur Khan Musakhel was the chief guest and Her Excellency Ms. Androulla Kaminara was the guest of honour. Till date, BRACE Programme with the support of European Union has distributed 5,386 devices amongst 4,659 PWSN in ten districts of Balochistan.



Her Excellency met with the beneficiaries and remarked that "The European Union is committed to building back stronger economy as we continue recovery from the pandemic, ending persistent poverty and building a more equal, fair and sustainable future for all." She also bought some hand-embroidered products made by women artisans trained under EU-Funded BRACE Programme.

So far, the Programme has provided 6,314 loans from a revolving fund to those with micro-investment plans. The very poorest, have been given 7,738 Income Generating Grants to purchase assets in line with their income-

generating ideas to improve their family's income. Around 2,302 women and men have learned demand-driven technical and job-ready skills. Approximately 9,828 women have received literacy and numeracy skills.

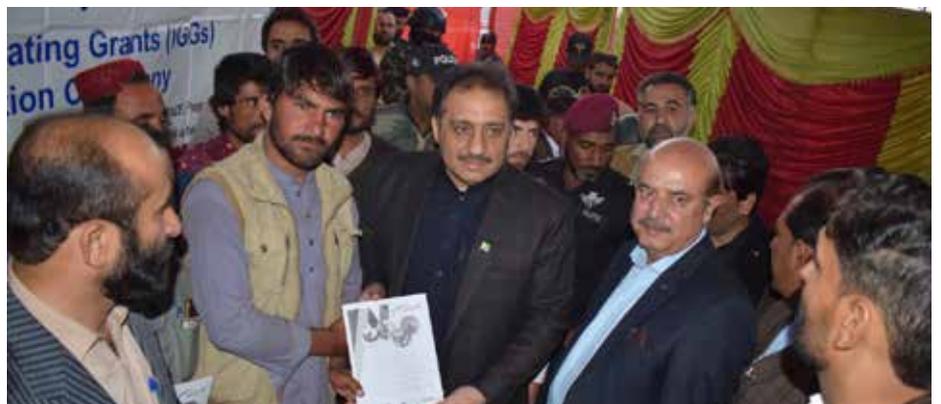
EU Ambassador Androulla Kaminara inaugurated a drinking water supply scheme that will benefit 12,650 community members. Drinking water supply schemes are constructed after the consensus of all the community organisations. Under the EU-Funded BRACE Programme, a total of 211 infrastructure schemes will be constructed in 211 union councils of 10 districts. So far, 129 community infrastructure schemes such as drinking water supply schemes have been initiated.

A delegation of the European Union comprising of the Head of Cooperation Mr Ovidiu Mic and Head of Finance, Contracts and Audits Ms Virginie Lambotte attended a dinner hosted by BRSP. The delegation met with EU's government counterparts, religious scholars, representatives of civil society organisations and representatives of minorities and media personal.



Governor Balochistan’s Visit to Loralai for BRACE Programme’s Asset Distribution and Community Engagement Ceremony

Honourable Governor Balochistan Mr Syed Zahoor Ahmad Agha visited district Loralai to meet with beneficiaries of EU-Funded BRACE Programme. BRSP organised a distribution ceremony of assistive devices to Persons with Special Needs (PWSNs), toolkits among TVET beneficiaries, Community Investment Fund (CIF) Loan to beneficiaries, Income Generating Grants. Chief Executive Officer BRSP Dr Shahnawaz Khan gave a detailed overview of overall BRSP’s intervention in Loralai in general and the EU-funded BRACE Programme’s contribution in specific. The ceremony was graced by Deputy Commissioner Loralai Dr Atiq ur Rehman. Community notables, political leaders, line department heads, law enforcement agencies and Community Institutions (CIs) members were also present.



Building a “Critical Mass” of Change-Agents at District and Provincial Level

The TA Component, with the Balochsiatn Rural Development Academy (BRDA), started in December 2019 with 3-days District Coordination (DC) Induction Courses. The participants included officials from the Deputy Commissioner Offices, the District Offices of the Local Government Dept., the RSPs and the TA-(Assistant) District Coordinators. The DC Courses aim at improved Intra-District coordination capacity, by building the capacity and skills of the critical Mass of 57 DC Course participants, from all the BRACE districts, to become the change-agents and promote Community Led Local Governance (CLLG) in Balochistan. The DC Courses resumed in 2021, with the DC Topic 1 Course on “Community-led Bottom-up Systems”.



This was followed in October 2021 with the DC Topic 2 Course “District Top-down Systems”, and in December 2021 with the DC Topic 3 Course “Integrating Community Institutions with the Local Government Systems”. All DC Courses were organized with, and held at, the BRDA, as part of the Institutional capacity building effort to develop the BRDA as the provincial leading training institute on Community-led local development approaches.

The District Development Strategy and Planning (DDSP) Assignment and the Joint District Development Committees' (JDDC) Terms of Reference (ToR)

The LG&RD Department and the BRACE TA Project have implemented from September to December 2021, a short term District Development Strategy & Plan (DDSP) Assignment, in three pilot Districts (Kech, Loralai/ Pishin). This assignment is developed in a participatory manner, and then tested the streamlined JDDC Meeting Procedures and Formats, that will ensure that the Government of Balochistan (GoB) top-down development investments and the Community Bottom Up development activities and priorities are coordinated and integrated by the JDDC Chair. The findings, recommendations and practical guidelines to conduct streamlined JDDC Coordination meetings were presented in the DDSP Closure Workshop to the relevant Provincial Policy-makers

and to the Government leadership. The DDSP recommendations focused on the Joint District Development Committee (JDDC) objectives and its 12 functions and made practical guidelines, procedures, formats, that were developed and tested in three pilot districts. The streamlined JDDC Guidelines, are first to be applied in the BRACE Districts of Balochistan.

Following finalisation of the GoB CLLG Policy in 2022, it is scheduled to apply the JDDCs in 10 districts of Balochistan. The latter requires considerable Capacity-building, and LGRDD and BRDA are to play a key role in building the necessary capacity-levels and understanding with the stakeholders in all districts.



DDS&P Assignment Closure workshop held on 9 December 2021



The DDSP Assignment Closure Workshop, was held in Quetta on the 9th December 2021 and presented to the relevant Provincial Policy-makers and to the Government leadership, the findings, recommendations and practical guidelines, procedures and formats, to conduct streamlined JDDC Coordination meetings, the guidelines, procedures, formats were tested in three JDDC Meetings in the pilot districts (Kech, Loralai, Pishin). The Chief Guest of the DDSP Closure Workshop was the honourable Minister for Local Government & Rural Development Department Sardar Saleh Muhammad Bhotani He presented the DDSP Assignment Findings and then provided his policy directions. The

Deputy Commissioners from Pishin, Loralai, Kech, and relevant Local Government District staff of the three pilot districts also participated in the DDSP Workshop and provided first-hand feed-back that how the streamlined JDDC Meeting Guidelines can facilitate true collaboration and coordination between Line-Departments, Local Government, and Mobilised and Registered Community Organisation, in a district. Other participants in the DDSP Workshop were Mr Qadir Nayel MPA, and Officials/Secretaries/Representatives of the key Line Departments, Planning and Development, Finance, Social Welfare and the Women Development Department, and the DGs of the Balochistan Rural Development Academy (BRDA) and the Balochistan Charities Registration & regulation Authority (BCR&RA) and representatives from CSOs, and the Rural Support Programmes (BRSP/ NRSP/RSPN) RSPN).

A Beggar-Turned Female Business Icon in remote Balochistan!

Safooran Mai, 55, widowed & mother of five sons, is famous as Seth Safooran in and around her village Sulband in District Kech, Balochistan. She is a beggar-turned successful women entrepreneur and hence widely respected in her community as a symbol of struggle and resilience to live a dignified life. Her husband died decades back, leaving her and her five young sons all alone to survive the hardships of life without any social protection. Her unbeatable and unprecedented struggle makes her an icon for other fellow womenfolk who are also exposed to similar hardships and endure the pain and agony in life.

The Income Generating Grant (IGG) from European Union-Funded BRACE Programme strengthened the foundation of her fragile business which was in nascence few years back. She recalls her fond memories when she was forced to beg in the streets for fifteen long years to feed six hungry mouths of her sons, as none of them was able to earn a penny for their mother or other siblings. At times, she was humiliated and had to with-stand the harassment as well. She was determined that she had to live and keep her sons alive. So she continued exploring all available options. She approached a local elite and requested him to donate her a thatched hut in the center of the village. She is still so grateful to this man who changed her life years back. Once she had the hut, she herself built its walls with mud, installed a wooden door and borrowed some money from other local rich men and initiated a small tuck-shop. That was the time when she learnt meaning of a dignified life and felt a sense of being an owner to an asset. She is the first self-made business woman of the village and hence, a very well deserved 'talk of the town'. People who had witnessed



her struggle to feed and raise her sons came forward as her clients and made it an informal commitment to buy goods from her small shop.

At this critical juncture of her business venture, when she was struggling to build her business to meet the requirements and expectations of local villagers, particularly women; she received an IGG under BRACE Programme. She recalls it as a 'divine blessing'. Safooran Mai procured additional items, particularly women's stuff, garments and sanitary pads to meet the local requirements. As a good entrepreneur, she was reluctant to give grocery and other items on credit. She knew she won't be able to recover if there is any default and it would be a blow to her shop. So she made a rule that she won't sell anything on credit. Local people accepted this, knowing that she was an elderly woman with limited mobility and unable to follow for recovering her dues.

A beggar until few years back is now a proud owner of a fully functional shop in the heart of the village. This is her business empire. She owns the piece of land, the shop structure and the goods. According to her estimates, the total value of the business is not less than PKR 500,000. The daily sale of her shop is around PKR 4,000 - 5,000 which saves her over 1,000 as net profit. She is not educated, but is regularly ploughing back her profits into her business to gradually expand it. Her eyes glitter with gratitude and pride when she tells her struggle and how she made her way to where she is right now. She married her all sons and is living with the one who is mentally retarded and has five kids, including a mentally challenged teenaged daughter. She is the sole breadwinner of her son's entire family and finds solace in the fact that she is feeding all of them without begging. She feels the sense of dignity and self-esteem while working from her shop. She plans to educate her grandchildren and vowed that she will help her sons to educate their children for a better future.

Adult Literacy and Numeracy training to Rural women under EU-Funded BRACE Programme



BRSP is providing Adult Literacy and Numeracy training to women from rural communities to strengthen basic literacy in the province. These trainings provide basic literacy and numeracy skill to women community members to engage them in systematic and sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge and skills. BRSP under EU funded BRACE Programme arranged a three days training of ALN teachers on capacity building, class management and syllabus management in Chaman and Pishin. So far BRSP has given ALN trainings to 7584 women in 9 districts of Balochistan.

Provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to Organised Rural Communities in Balochistan

BRSP with the financial assistance of funded BRACE Programme, offered Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to 45 beneficiaries from Killa Abdullah who will be enrolled at NLC Jhelum. TVET interventions are specifically designed to alleviate poverty at household level by training beneficiaries in technical skills to earn a sustainable livelihood.



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