Gross National Happiness Commission

Targeted Household Poverty Programme (THPP)

Baseline Survey and Development of Targeted Poverty Interventions for the Poorest Individuals/Households in Bhutan

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Research & Evaluation Division, Gross National Happiness Commission

BACKGROUND

Recognizing the continued prevalence of poverty in Bhutan, the Royal Government has accorded highest priority in addressing poverty during the 11th Five Year Plan (2013-2018) with the target to reduce poverty from the current 12% (Poverty Assessment Report 2012) to less than 5% by the end of 11th Plan. In addition, the country has made several international commitments to address poverty issues such as the SAARC Decade of Poverty Alleviation (2005-2015), SAARC Development Goals (SDGs) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Several targeted poverty reduction interventions have been initiated by the Government through the National Rehabilitation Programme, Rural Economy Advancement Programme, Rural Livelihoods Programme, Rural Remote Community Development Programme, Market Access and Growth Intensification Project (MAGIP), etc. which are mostly targeted at the village level.

In order to have more effective poverty reduction, it has been decided to complement village level interventions with household level poverty reduction initiatives. As such, based on directives from the Cabinet the Department of Local Governance in collaboration with the Local Governments identified 2,362 poorest individuals/households. However, given the concerns expressed by the Local Governments on the inclusiveness and reliability of the list of poorest households submitted due to the lack of criteria and guidelines, HPM instructed the GNHCS to verify the information once more. The following criteria were shared with the Dzongkhags for identification of poorest households after discussions with the Dzongkhag Planning Officers (DPOs) in October 2014:

	Guiding Criteria for Short-Listing of the Poorest Households			
	Dimensions	**Indicators**	**Definition**	**(Check)**
1	Education	1. Child Enrolment	Any school-aged child (6-12 years) not attending school in class 1 to class 6 (please write NA if no school-aged child in the household)	
2	Health	2. Disability	Any household member with a form of disability: hearing, speaking, seeing, physical or mental	
3	Housing	3. Roofing	The household has no proper roofing	
		4. Structure	Almost dilapidated	
4	Community Vitality	5. Elderly	All the household members are aged 65 and above	
5	Financial Security	6. Cash income	The household has no source of cash income	
6	Food Security	7. Land ownership	Household has no land or less than 1 acre of land	

Threshold: If a household is deprived of at least one of the indicators, then the household can be shortlisted

Note: The criteria for short-listing of the poorest households are developed based on the following:

1. Easy to verify

2. Correlated to poverty

3. Collectively represent poorest households

Based on the criteria, the revised list of poorest households is given below:

Table 1: Summary of Poorest Households/Individuals in all Dzongkhags (Revised list submitted by Local Governments in November 2014)

SI. No.	Dzongkhag	No. of Gewogs	No. of Villages	No. of hhs.
1	Bumthang	4	17	18
2	Chukha	11	89	222
3	Dagana	14	68	249
4	Gasa	4	16	26
5	Haa	2	11	28
6	Lhuentse	8	90	151
7	Mongar	17	90	393
8	Pemagatshel	9	67	197
9	Punakha	11	98	185
10	Paro	10	57	75
11	Tsirang	12	53	146
12	Trashigang	10	96	302
13	Thimphu	6	38	82
14	Samtse	10	69	165
15	Samdrupjongkhar	11	91	207
16	Sarpang	11	68	165
17	Trongsa	5	28	78
18	Trashi Yangtse	8	71	158
19	Wangdue	8	71	206
20	Zhemgang	8	71	101
	Total	**179**	**1359**	**3154**

The revised list of poorest households, as submitted by the Dzongkhags has now increased to 3,154 from the initial 2,362 households, an addition of 792 households.

OBJECTIVE

Based on the above information the Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat with the support of the National Statistics Bureau was instructed to conduct a survey to verify the selected households, collect baseline information on current living conditions and also formulate targeted poverty reduction interventions for the selected households.

The focus of the interventions would be securing sustainable livelihoods by meeting basic needs and ensuring access to socio-economic services.

The specific objectives are to:

i.   Assess and verify the identified list of poorest households;
ii.   Collect baseline information and individual profiles of the identified households; and
iii.   Develop need-based sustainable interventions.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The households will be assessed using a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) which comprises of six dimensions namely i) Standard of Living; ii) Health; iii) Education; iv) Community Vitality; v) Financial Security; and vi) Food Security. Each individual/household will be assessed against the MPI to determine the extent of poverty and also formulate need-based interventions to reduce poverty. The following indicators will be used under each dimension:

Dimensions	Indicators
1. Education	1. Years of schooling 2. Child Enrolment
2. Health	1. Child mortality 2. Disability
3. Standard of living	1. Electricity 2. Road access 3. Safe-piped drinking water system 4. Cooking Fuel 5. Roofing 6. Flooring 7. Sanitation
4. Community vitality	1. Availability of social support 2. Gender empowerment 3. Community Events
5. Financial security	1. Income 2. Reliability of income 3. Access to rural micro credit 4. Skills
6. Food Security	1. Land ownership 2. Livestock 3. Food sufficiency

The survey will collect household level information through questionnaires and interviews. In addition, observations and pictorial compilations of existing living conditions will also be used as inputs for the formulation of baseline data and interventions.

The data collected will be processed and analyzed to understand individual/household conditions, needs, perceptions, potentials, skills and challenges. Quantitative analysis will be carried out using STATA and Excel based applications. For each household, a multi-dimensional poverty index will be calculated to determine the extent of poverty and to identify its deprivations. The MPI can be used to prioritize the households for interventions.

TARGETED HOUSEHOLD INTERVENTIONS

The survey will result in developing need-based interventions for the 3154 households. Such interventions would include: housing improvement and construction; supply of agricultural machinery/equipment; income generating interventions like dairy and poultry farming, cash crop cultivation, in kind support, etc.; improvement of food and nutrition; and monitoring and evaluation.

IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Research and Evaluation Division (RED) under the GNHC will take the lead role in coordinating and implementing the survey in collaboration with the National Statistics Bureau and the Local Governments.

The implementation of the interventions will be based on the nature of activities but largely conducted by the Local Governments.

CURRENT STATUS

1. HPM directed RED, GNHCS to spearhead the survey for validation and targeted interventions for poorest households identified by the Dzongkhags
2. Sensitized Dzongkhag Planning Officers on THPP and discussed Concept Note and MPI criteria with them during the DPOs meeting in Thimphu.
3. Finalized criteria for identification of poorest HHs after consultations with DPOs.
4. Compiled revised list of poorest HHs based on MPI
5. Survey Conducted in 20 Dzongkhags
6. Data Entry and Analysis under process

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