

ASSESSING INDICATORS FOR TARGETING THE NEEDY UNDER THE IMPROVED MATERNITY AND LACTATING MOTHER ALLOWANCE PROGRAM IN RURAL AND URBAN BANGLADESH

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With assistance from

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Acronym List

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCC	Behavior change communication
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BIHS	Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey
BKMEA	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BMI	Body Mass Index
CBP	Child Benefit Program
DWA	Department of Women Affairs
FYP	Five-Year Planning
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HPNSDP	Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Development Program
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMLMA	Improved Maternity and Lactating Mother Allowance
IYCF	Infant and young child feeding
LMAP	Lactating Mother Allowance Program
MAP	Maternity Allowance Program
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
PRSSP	Policy Research and Strategy Support Program
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFP	World Food Programme

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The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) completed this study upon request of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the lead ministry implementing the Maternity Allowance (MA) and Lactating Mother Allowance (LMA) programs in rural and urban Bangladesh, respectively; and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Bangladesh, who is currently providing technical assistance to MOWCA for designing the Improved Maternity and Lactating Mother Allowance Program, together with IFPRI. We thank MOWCA and WFP for providing IFPRI with the information on the current MA and LMA program designs and respective targeting criteria, which were vital for this study.

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1. Background and Objectives of the Study

Child stunting in Bangladesh declined dramatically over the past two decades, but remains high at approximately 36 percent (NIPORT 2016). Inadequate maternal nutrition during pregnancy remains prevalent in Bangladesh and is associated with children being born small-for-gestational-age, which is responsible for up to 20 percent of stunting in children between the ages of 1 to 5 years old (Nguyen et al. 2017; Christian et al. 2013). Diets of young children in Bangladesh are also grossly inadequate, further contributing to chronic undernutrition. Renewed efforts to reduce the problem of child undernutrition must focus on improving maternal nutrition (during pregnancy) and the nutrition of the child.

The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) calls for the development of a national Child Benefit Program (CBP) to provide benefits to women in poor households starting during pregnancy and up to age 4 of the child (GED 2015). The proposed CBP will build on the existing Maternity Allowance (MA) and Lactating Mother Allowance (LMA) programs implemented by the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Government plans to combine the MA and LMA programs into the Improved Maternity and Lactating Mother Allowance (IMLMA) program, which will generate programmatic and outcome evidence to inform the development of the national CBP.

The Bangladesh Government initiated the MA program during the 2007-08 fiscal year. During the 2017-18 cycle, the MA program provided financial assistance to about 600,000 poor pregnant women in rural Bangladesh to meet their demand for nutritious food, which will increase to 700,000 beneficiaries in the upcoming 2018-19 program cycle. Like the MA program, the LMA program is an income transfer program that started in 2010-11, and targeted about 200,000 poor working women in urban areas during the 2017-18 program cycle, which will increase to 250,000 beneficiaries in the next program cycle. Both the MA and LMA programs currently provide a monthly cash transfer of 500 taka to program participants for a total of 24 months.

The MOWCA has proposed key improvements of the MA and LMA programs, including better targeting, monthly enrollment of eligible women, timely payments on a monthly basis, increasing the monthly transfer amount from 500 taka to 800 taka, and adding high-quality nutrition behavior change communication (BCC).

Upon request of the MOWCA and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Bangladesh, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has undertaken this study, which aims to (1) assess the suitability of indicators used for targeting the poor by the existing MA and LMA programs; and (2) suggest ways to improve program targeting to reach the poor and

undernourished women most effectively under the Improved Maternity and Lactating Mother Allowance (IMLMA) Program, which will combine the MA and LMA programs.

A well-targeted intervention improves the real income, food consumption, and nutrition of the neediest without providing those benefits to members of society who are better off. As such, targeting benefits to those most in need is a cost-effective way of implementing a program. Analyzing data from national surveys, we propose six indicators to target poor rural households effectively, and five indicators to improve targeting for households in metropolitan and other urban areas, which are based on easily observable and verifiable characteristics for selecting program participants. Based on these proposed indicators, a female applicant would be eligible for the improved program if her family meets at least one of the proposed criteria.

We have organized this study into seven sections. Section 2 reviews the data used for this study's analyses, followed by the methodology in Section 3. Section 4 describes the current eligibility criteria under the existing MA and LMA programs. We assess the criteria's targeting effectiveness in Section 5. Next, Section 6 identifies promising indicators that have high potential for pro-poor targeting in rural and urban areas. We then conclude the study, reiterating the importance of establishing robust indicators for the IMLMA program, which will then evolve into the CBP.

2. Data

The data for the analysis in this study came from two sources: (1) the 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh; and (2) IFPRI's 2015 Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS). We have used the HIES data for targeting the poor in urban areas and BIHS data for targeting the poor in rural areas.

Although HIES is a nationally representative survey of both rural and urban Bangladesh, we have used the 2015 BIHS dataset for the analysis of indicators in rural areas because it is more recent and comprehensive than the 2010 HIES and because it is consistent with our recent study on targeting of the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) program implemented by MOWCA in rural areas, for which we used the BIHS data (Ahmed 2018). The HIES and BIHS are briefly described below.

2.1 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) under the Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh conducts the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) on a regular basis. The first round of HIES was conducted in 1973/74 – the first national survey in independent Bangladesh. Typically, the HIES is undertaken every five years. Since 1973/74, BBS has completed 16 rounds of HIES, the latest one in 2016. Data for this study came from the 2010

HIES, because the full dataset of the 2016 HIES is not yet available in the public domain. The 2010 HIES provides data on household food and non-food consumption expenditures, income, education, employment, savings, housing conditions, sanitation and water supply, electricity usage, migration, participation in social safety net programs, and other areas (BBS 2011).

The BBS uses HIES data to estimate poverty and its correlates in Bangladesh. HIES also provides information that allows the Government of Bangladesh to formulate evidence-based policies and enables results-based monitoring of indicators for the Five-Year Planning (FYP) process and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The World Bank provides technical assistance and financial support to HIES.

2.2 Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS)

IFPRI researchers designed the BIHS—the most comprehensive, nationally representative rural household survey to date in the country. In fact, it is the only nationally representative rural survey that has collected detailed data on (1) plot-level agricultural production and practices, (2) dietary intake of all individual household members, (3) anthropometric measurements (height and weight) of all household members, and (4) data to measure Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). IFPRI researchers consulted the 2010 HIES questionnaires to collect data on a similar set of variables on household food and nonfood consumption expenditures. Because of the high-quality and wide-ranging data, the BIHS has emerged as a global public good, with thousands of users across six continents.

Two panel survey rounds of the BIHS have been conducted—the baseline in 2012 and midline in 2015—which tracks the same set of rural households over time. This study has used data from the 2015 BIHS. The BIHS is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Policy Research and Strategy Support Program (PRSSP) in Bangladesh, implemented by IFPRI.

3. Method of Analysis

For targeting the poor, this study assesses household welfare status by analyzing household consumption expenditure and its distribution. Consumption expenditure is used as a proxy for income for two reasons. First, expenditures are likely to reflect permanent income and, hence, are a better indicator of consumption behavior (Friedman 1957). Second, data on expenditures are generally more reliable and stable than income data. Since expenditures are intended to serve as a proxy for income, the terms "expenditure" and "income" are used interchangeably.

The measure of total consumption expenditure is quite extensive and draws upon responses to several sections of the HIES and the BIHS. In brief, consumption is measured as the sum of total food consumption and total nonfood (nondurable and durable) expenses. Expenditures on individual consumption items were aggregated to construct total expenditures. Quantities of

goods produced by the household for home consumption were valued at the average unit market prices of commodities.

The analysis of HIES and BIHS data disaggregates the sample households into per capita expenditure quintiles. This approach ranks households along the distribution of total per capita expenditures into five intervals of wellbeing. Households in the first quintile represent the poorest 20 percent of all households in the income distribution, while those in the fifth quintile represent the richest 20 percent of all households.

4. Selection Process for Program Participation

The selection processes for the current MA and LMA programs are described in the MOWCA's program implementation guidelines. Program beneficiaries are selected by administrative review based on officially prescribed eligibility criteria.

The MA program is implemented in rural areas. The Union Maternity Allowance Committee completes the beneficiary selection process in presence of the candidates on a pre-scheduled date and venue announced locally. The Committee is made up of Chairman of the Union *Parishad* (council), female Union *Parishad* member, Union Social Worker of the Social Services Office, Union Family Planning service provider, Union Assistant Land Officer, a school teacher, and partner NGO representatives. The Committee reviews applications, selects applicants who are pregnant and further prioritized based on the eligibility criteria, and submits the primary list of selected applicants and recommendations to upazila and district committees for approval. The Committee is also mandated to resolve grievances related to beneficiary selection (DWA 2011).

The LMA program, implemented in urban areas, uses a district-level Working Lactating Mother Selection Committee to select program beneficiaries. The Committee is comprised of the Deputy Commissioner (district administrator), civil surgeon, secretary of city corporation/municipality, a female ward commissioner nominated by the Deputy Commissioner, deputy directors of social welfare and family planning departments, an NGO/CBO representative nominated by the Deputy Commissioner, and a district women affairs officer. The Committee collects lists of potential beneficiaries from the concerned woman ward commissioner. Additionally, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) provide lists of feasible beneficiaries under their jurisdiction. Moreover, any woman can apply directly to the district woman affairs officer (MOWCA 2011).

4.1 Current Eligibility Criteria for the Maternity Allowance (MA) Program

The eligibility criteria presented below are adapted from the implementation guidelines for the MA program (DWA 2011):

- a. A first-time pregnancy or a second pregnancy.
- b. Aged 20 years or above.
- c. Total monthly income is 1,500 taka or less.
- d. The poor disabled mothers will be given preference.
- e. Living either in own household or someone else's place.
- f. No ownership of agricultural land or pond for fish farming by self or family.
- g. The beneficiary must be pregnant during the time of the selection process (July—the start of the fiscal year in Bangladesh).

Anyone who fulfills at least five of the conditions, including the mandatory criteria (that is, points a, b, and g listed above), will be included in the primary list for selection.

In addition, the following rules apply to the selection process:

- Women who are poorer than others will get preference.
- If the first two children die during pregnancy or within two years of birth, the mother will be eligible for the allowance during her third pregnancy.
- A beneficiary is eligible for only one round of maternity allowance at a time for a period of two years.
- If the specified cycle of allowance is left incomplete due to abortion, the mother will be eligible for two years' allowance given that all conditions are met.

4.2 Current Eligibility Criteria for the Lactating Mother Allowance (LMA) Program

The following eligibility criteria are translated from Bangla implementation guidelines for the LMA program (MOWCA 2011):

- a. Should apply in prescribed form.
- b. Age should be at least 20 years old.
- c. Monthly total income of less than or equal to 5,000 taka and have no other income source.
- d. Should be poor, vulnerable, lactating and pregnant mother employed in any specified organization under BGMEA)/ BKMEA.
- e. Should be a permanent resident, which means voter in 61 district headquarters area or *pourashava*/city corporation (specified area for the program) area or in later expanded 64 district headquarters and certified by concerned ward commissioner.
- f. Poor disabled employed pregnant/lactating mother would get preference in getting the allowance.
- g. Poor working employed pregnant/lactating mother would be eligible to get this allowance for once in a lifetime during pregnancy or for maximum 24 months after delivery of the first and second child.

- h. No employed mother would be eligible to get this allowance for the delivery of the third or next child. Third pregnancy may be considered if the child died during the first or second pregnancy or within two years of age.
- i. If any working mother gets married more than once, she would be eligible during the first or second pregnancy or the lactating mother of a first or second child.
- j. If, for any reason, the child dies within two years after birth, the mother would get the allowance up to 24 months.
- k. If the selected working pregnant mother dies anytime within 24 months, her allowance from assistance fund would stop. If the child survives, the allowance would be given to a legal guardian of the child for the remaining period. In this regard, the identity card of the guardian should be attested by a ward councilor/first class officer/Upazila *Nirbahi* Officer/Upazila Women Affairs Officer.
- l. Whenever beneficiary selection is accomplished, the beneficiaries would get allowance from the beginning of fiscal year (July).

5. Assessment of the Current Selection Criteria

A program's effectiveness in reaching the neediest depends largely on the appropriateness of indicators used for beneficiary selection. Good indicators are those that are highly correlated with poverty or undernutrition, yet are easy to observe, record, and verify. How effective are the current selection criteria for the MA and LMA programs in identifying the neediest?

5.1 Maternity Allowance Program

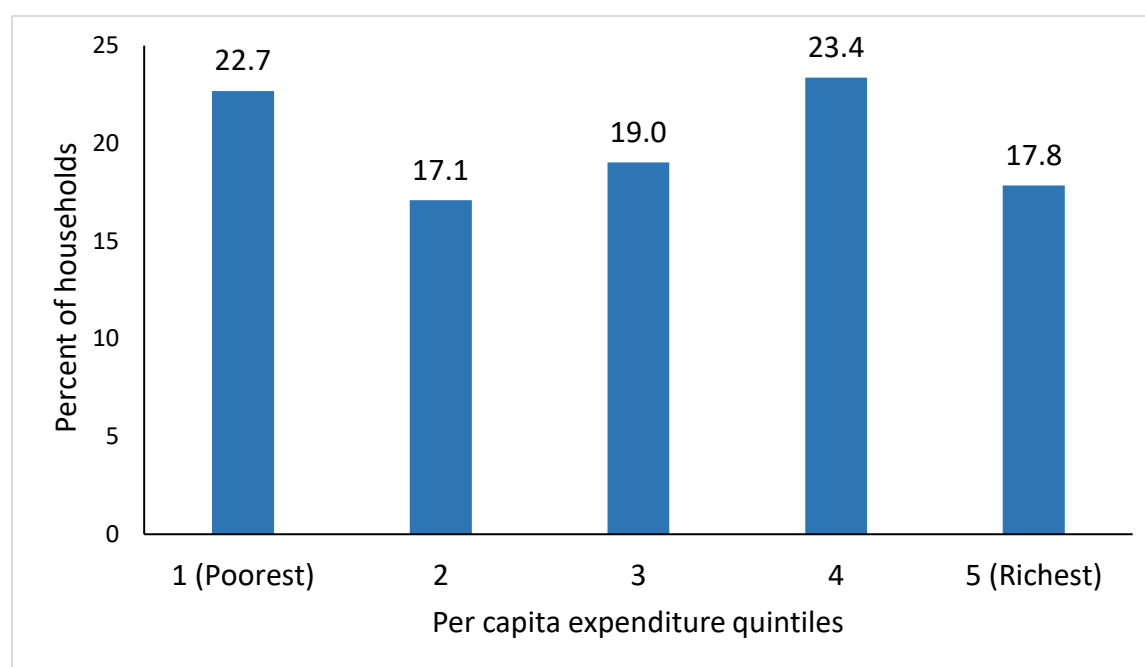
The current MA program is implemented only in rural areas. As explained in Section 2 above, we used IFPRI's BIHS dataset for analyzing MA program indicators in rural areas. From the list of the MA eligibility criteria, we selected only those indicators that are being used by program implementers to identify the poor. For example, we analyzed ownership of agricultural land as an indicator of poverty, but not women age at least 20 years or pregnant women because the latter criteria are used to select program beneficiaries irrespective of their economic status.

First, we assessed the selection criterion, "Total monthly income is 1,500 taka or less." The 2011 official program document did not specify whether 1,500 taka should be total monthly per capita or per household or income of the potential participant of the program. Results of IFPRI's 2011/12 BIHS (a nationally representative survey of rural Bangladesh) show that monthly per capita average consumption expenditure (as proxy for income) in rural areas was 2,692 taka, and for the poorest 20 percent of households (first quintile) the average income was 1,323 taka (Ahmed et al. 2013). However, with economic growth and inflation, per capita nominal incomes have increased over time. Results of the 2015 BIHS show that the average per capita expenditure in rural Bangladesh was 3,539 taka per month, which is 31 percent higher than the 2011 level. Among the set of selection criteria, it is most difficult (if not impossible) for the

selection committee to accurately assess income. Verifying income is difficult in Bangladesh and in many other developing countries because of the difficulty of documenting level and sources of income of household members. This is mainly due to the lack of income tax records, as well as fluctuations in the level and source of income. Self-reported income is likely to be either understated or inaccurate. Correct measurement of household income or expenditures requires expensive and time-consuming surveys such as HIES or BIHS.

Second, we reviewed the selection criterion that states, “The poor disabled mothers will be given preference.” Since the criterion does not specify how the poor could be identified, we analyzed the distribution of households across income groups where at least one household member is a disabled woman who is at least age 20. Figure 1 shows the results by per capita expenditure quintile groups. About 5 percent of all rural households fall under this category. There is no clear pattern in the distribution of households with disabled women across income groups, which may be expected because disability is a random phenomenon.

Figure 1 Percentage of households with at least one disabled woman aged 20 or above by income groups, 2015 (4.8 percent of all rural households)

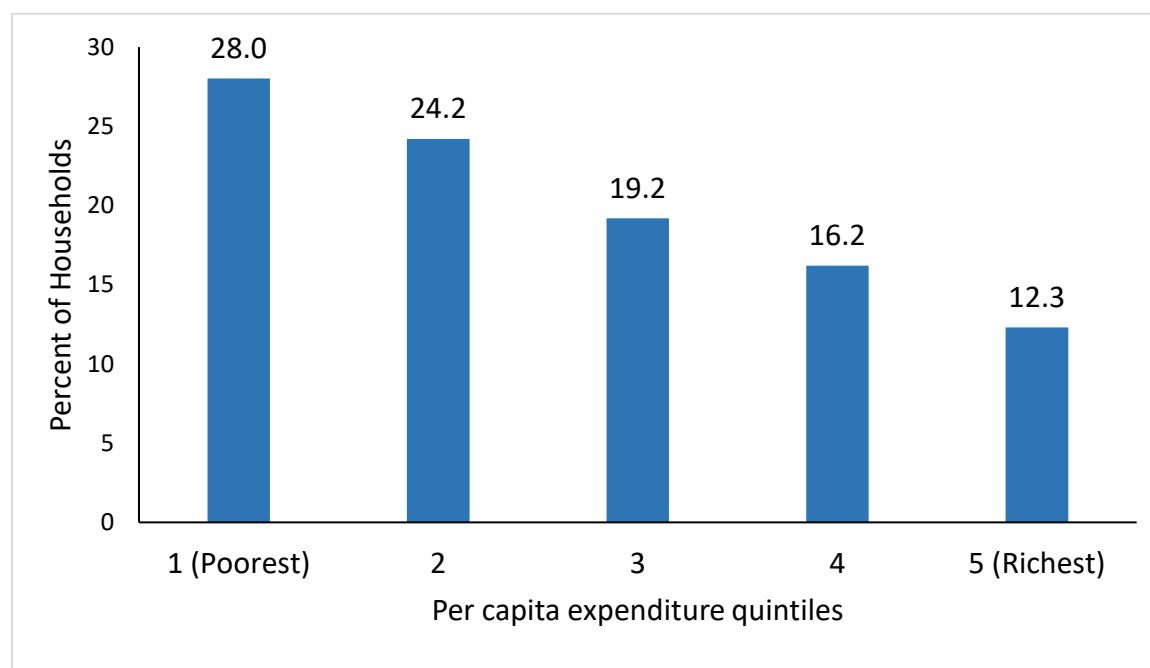


Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

Third, upon studying the selection criterion, “Living either in own household or someone else’s place,” we found that this indicator is not well-defined. Therefore, we suggest making the wording of this criterion more precise. We interpreted the first part of the criterion as a household who only has its homestead for living and no other land, and second part as a

household who lives in someone else's place for free (that is, not paying any rent). Figure 2 shows the first part of the criterion. About 39 percent of rural households belong to this category, of which 28 percent are among the poorest 20 percent in the income distribution. This category is highly correlated with poverty, and hence, is an effective indicator to select poor women for the MA program.

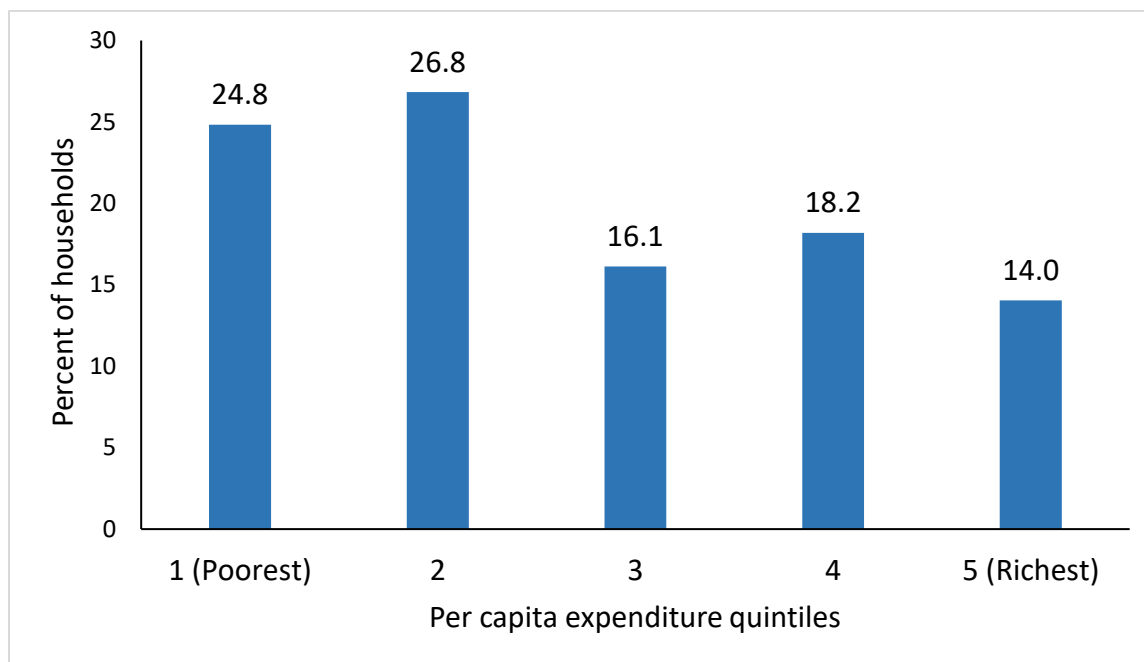
Figure 2 Percentage of households who own only homestead land and no other land (38.7 percent of all rural households) by income groups, 2015



Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

Figure 3 demonstrates the distribution for the second part of the criterion. Only 3.4 percent of all rural households belong to this category, showing a negative relation with income.

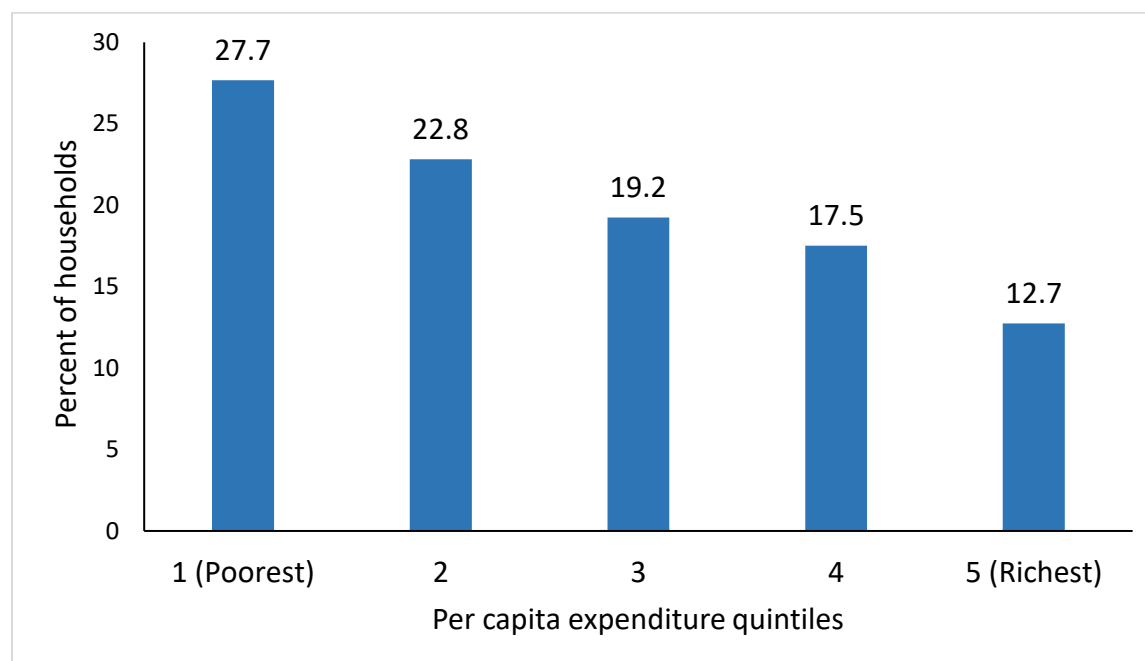
Figure 3 Percentage of households who live someone else's house without paying any rent by income groups, 2015 (3.4 percent of all rural households)



Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

Fourth, we assessed the selection criterion, “No ownership of agricultural land or pond for fish farming by self or family.” The distribution of this indicator is shown in Figure 4, the pattern of which is very similar to the indicator analyzed in the third point above—that is, households who own only homestead land and no other land.

Figure 4 Percentage of households who have no owned agricultural land or cultivable pond by income groups, 2015 (50.9 percent of all rural households)



Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

5.2 Lactating Mother Allowance Program

The existing Lactating Mother Allowance (LMA) Program is implemented in urban areas. We have used 2010 HIES dataset for the analysis of LMA program indicators in urban areas, as stated in Section 2 above.

Characteristics of urban areas are more heterogeneous than those of rural areas. For example, poverty indicators are quite different in mega cities than smaller towns. The 2010 HIES sample is statistically representative at various administrative levels in urban and rural areas. We disaggregated our analysis of urban HIES data by metropolitan urban and other urban areas. The metropolitan urban stratum includes the following cities: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Gazipur, and Narayanganj.

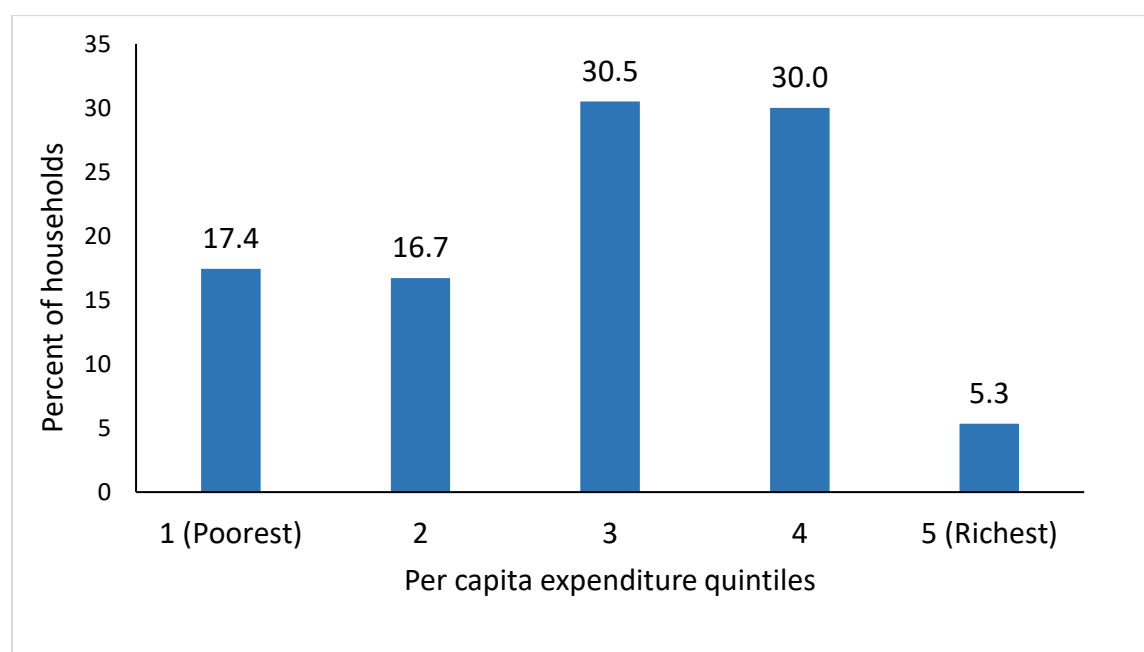
For selecting indicators for assessing their performance in targeting the poor under the LMA program, we followed the same approach used for the MA program and selected two indicators from the list of LMA eligibility criteria.

The criterion, “Monthly total income of 5,000 taka or less than that and have no other income source” has similar drawbacks as the income-based criterion assessed above for the MA program. Therefore, the use of such indicators is inappropriate for effectively targeting the poor, and can provide scope for favoritism in selection of program beneficiaries.

Second, we assessed the selection criterion, “Should be poor, vulnerable, lactating and a pregnant mother employed in any specified organization under Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)/Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).” Since the criterion does not define poor and vulnerable, we analyzed the distribution of households across income groups where at least one household member is a female garment factory worker. About 6 percent of all metropolitan households have female garment factory workers. Figure 5 shows that most female garment workers (60.5 percent) tend to belong to middle- to upper-middle-income households, and about 34 percent of female garment workers can be considered poor who belong to the first and the second quintile groups.

Since the general perception is that female garment workers are among the poorest, we collected information through informal interviews with managers of a few readymade garment factories in the suburb of Dhaka city to understand our results from the HIES data. The interviews reveal that only about one-third of female garment workers live with family members (for example, husbands or other family members) who also earn income. Otherwise, most female garment workers live in mess or hostels with other fellow workers, and would thereby be excluded from the HIES sample.

Figure 5 Percentage of households with female garment factory worker (6.0 percent of all metropolitan urban households) by income groups, 2010



Source: 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

6. Promising Indicators for Effectively Targeting the Poor

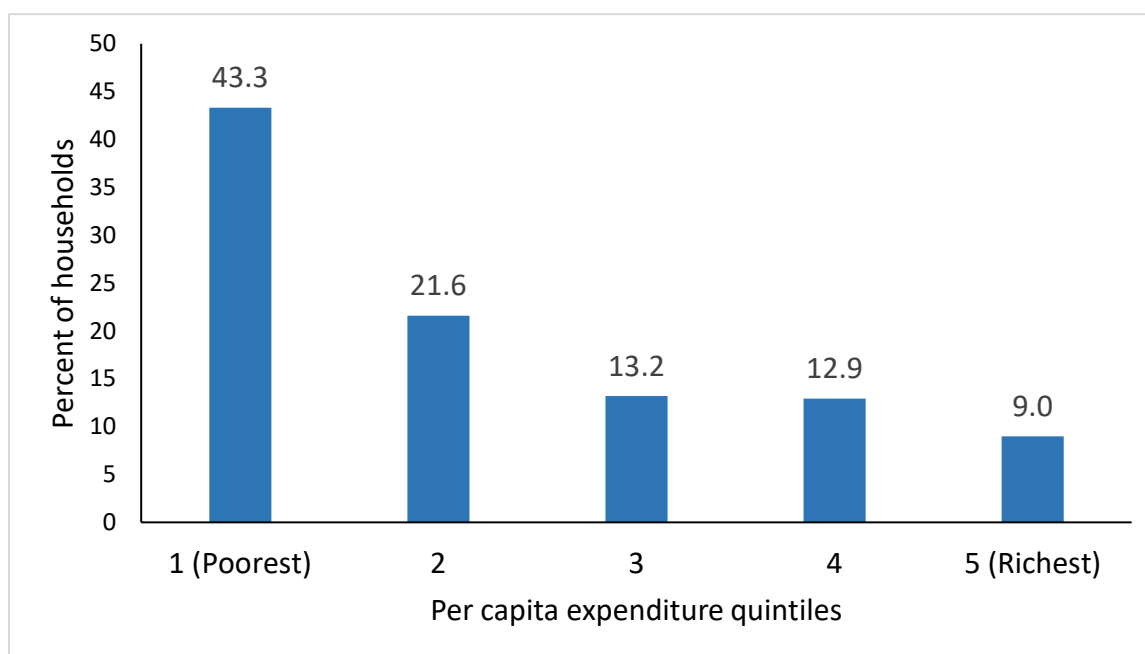
Using the 2010 HIES and 2015 BIHS data, we have identified several indicators that are highly correlated with poverty, are observable, and verifiable. Results from IFPRI's BIHS data show a strong negative association between income and food insecurity (Ahmed et al. 2013), as well as between adult underweight women and household income (Ahmed 2016). Therefore, these indicators have strong potential for effectively selecting undernourished women from poor and food-insecure households for the Improved Maternity and Lactating Mother Allowance (IMLMA) Program, which will combine the MA and LMA programs.

6.1 Promising Selection Criteria for Rural Areas

Among the set of indicators we have analyzed using the 2015 BIHS data, the following are the most promising for rural areas:

Households without any private latrine (only 3.3 percent of all rural households). Among these households, 43 percent belong to the poorest quintile and 65 percent are among the poorest 40 percent of rural households (Figure 6).

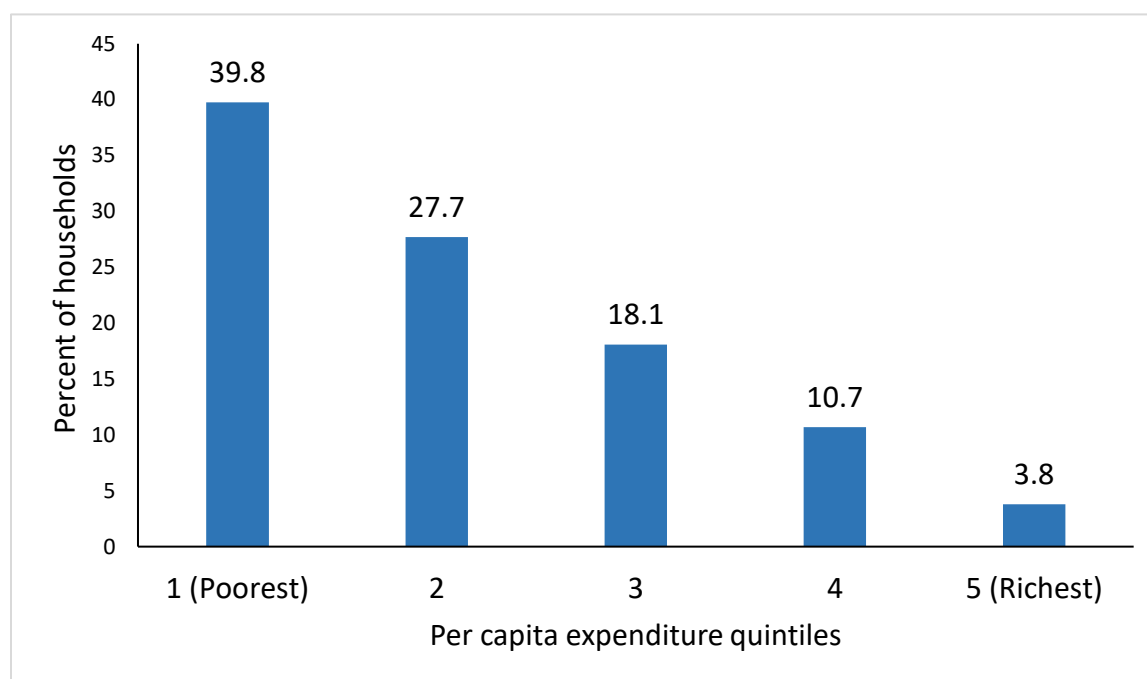
Figure 6 Percentage of households without any private latrine (3.3 percent of all rural households) by income groups, 2015



Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

Household head or the main income earner is a rickshaw or tricycle van puller (4.2 percent of all rural households). Among these households, 40 percent belong to the poorest quintile and 68 percent are among the poorest 40 percent of rural households (Figure 7).

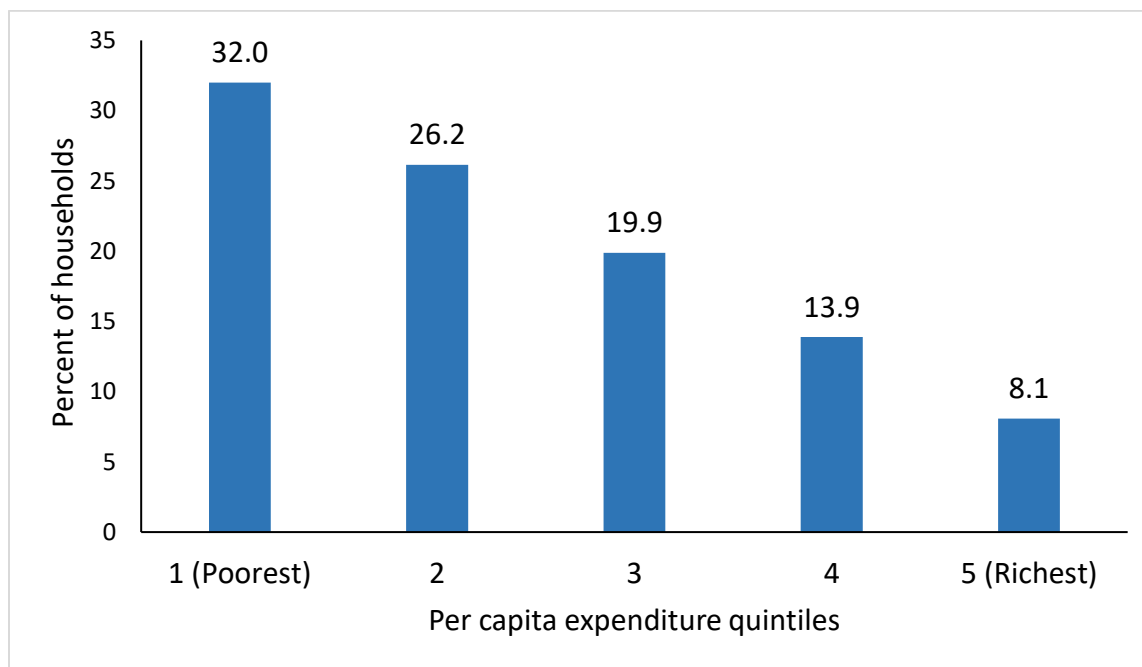
Figure 7 Percentage of household head/ main income earner is rickshaw and van puller (4.2 percent of all rural households) by income groups, 2015



Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

Households without electricity connection, but the village has electricity grid (31.6 percent of all rural households). Among these rural households, 32 percent belong to the poorest quintile and 58 percent are among the poorest 40 percent of rural households (Figure 8).

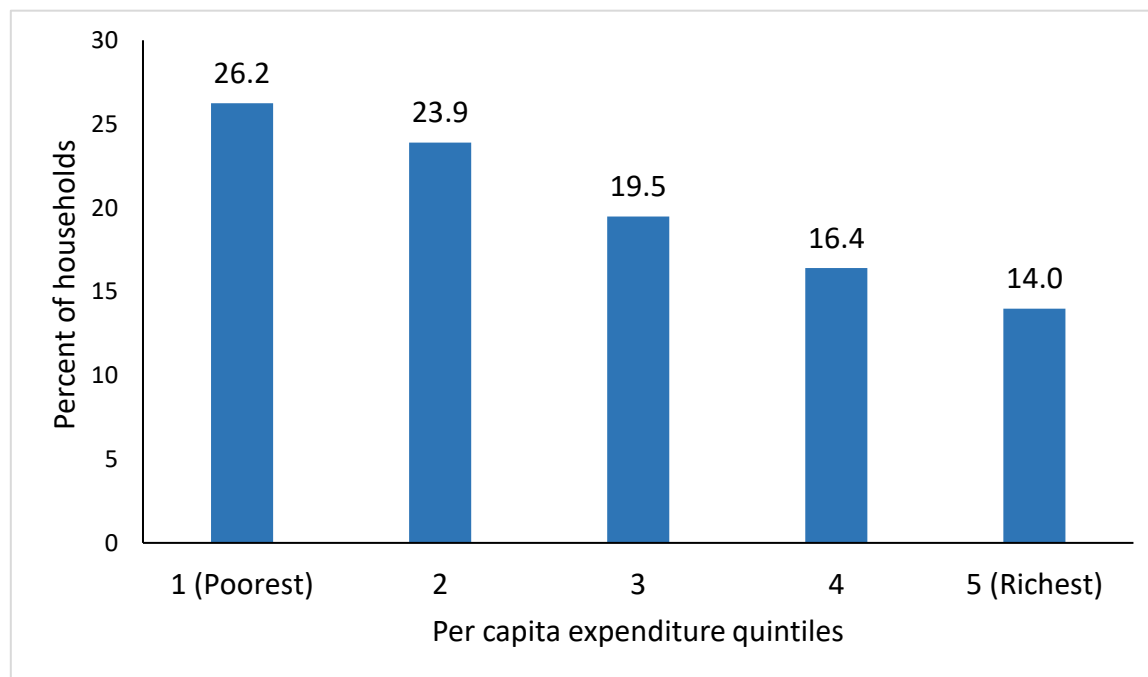
Figure 8 Percentage of households without electricity connection, but the village has electricity (31.6 percent of all rural households) by income groups, 2015



Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

Households without any private tubewell (40.4 percent of all rural households). Among these households, 26 percent belong to the poorest quintile and 50 percent are among the poorest 40 percent of rural households (Figure 9).

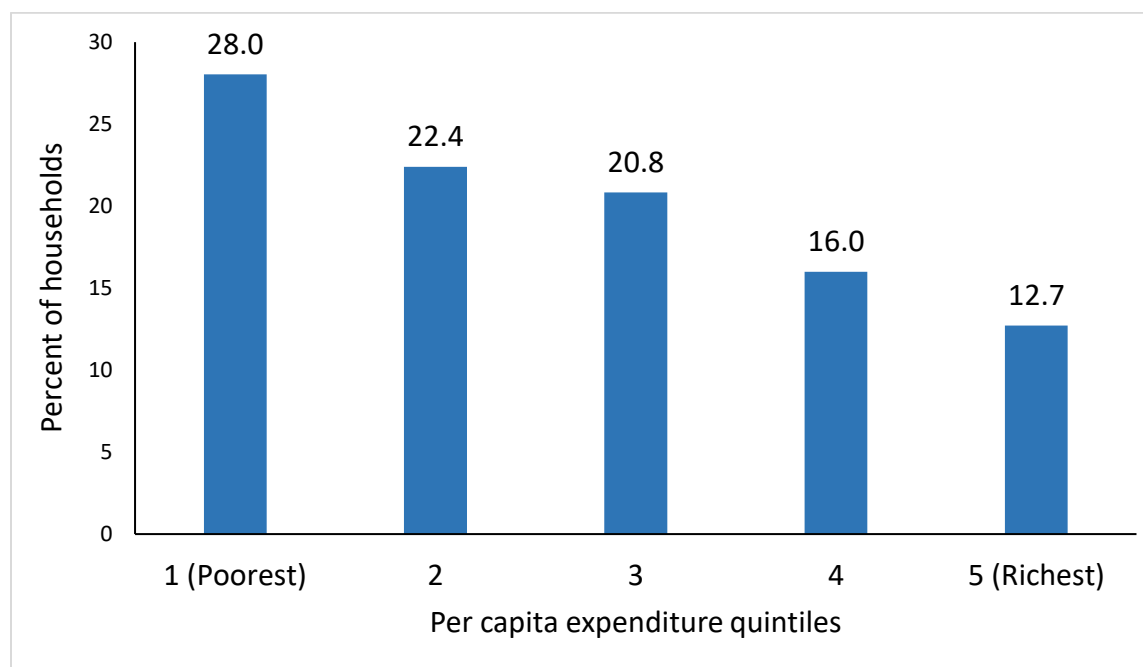
Figure 9 Percentage of households without any private tubewell (40.4 percent of all rural households) by income groups, 2015



Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

Households with walls made of jute sticks, bamboo, etc. (not brick or tin) (27.8 percent of all rural households). Among these households, 28 percent belong to the poorest quintile and 50 percent are among the poorest 40 percent of rural households (Figure 10).

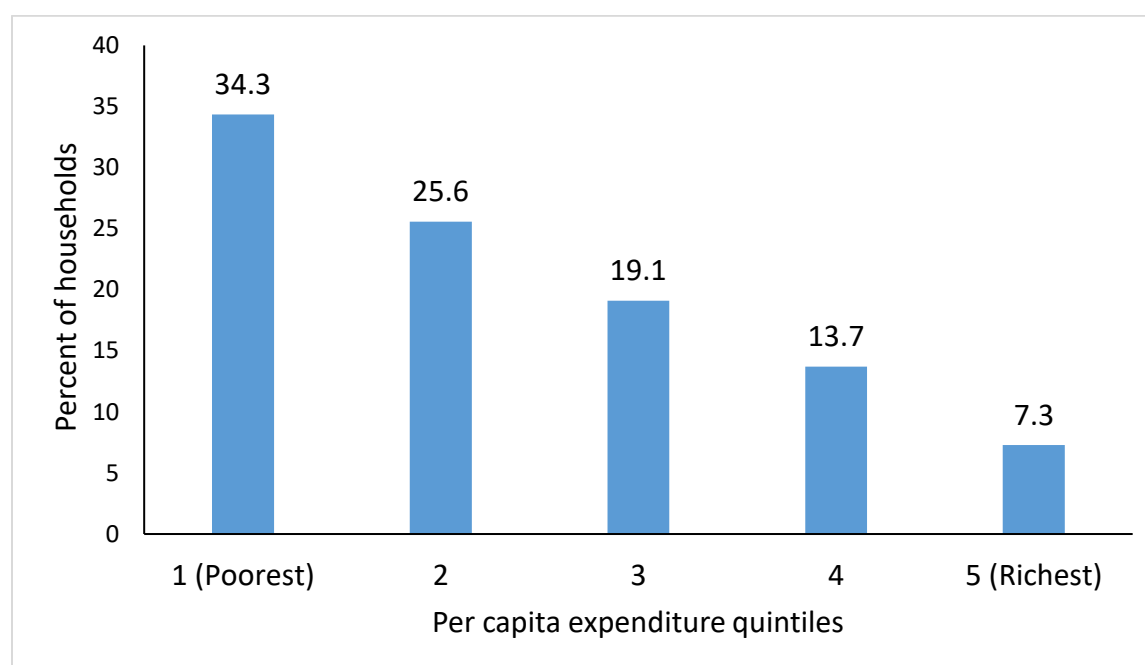
Figure 10 Percentage of households with house walls made of jute sticks/bamboo, etc. (not brick or tin) (27.8 percent of all rural households) by income groups, 2015



Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

Households without an electric fan (39.6 percent of all rural households). Among these households, slightly over one-third belong to the poorest quintile, and around 60 percent constitute the bottom 40 percent of rural households (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Percentage of households without an electric fan (39.6 percent of all rural households) by income group, 2015



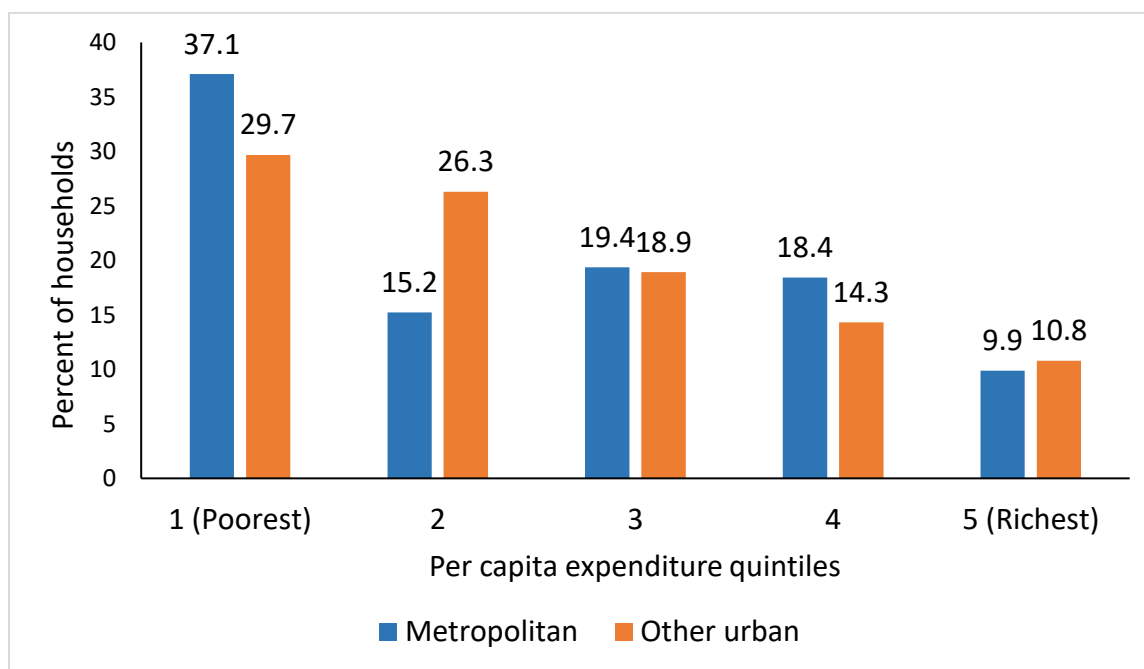
Source: IFPRI Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey, 2015.

6.2 Promising Selection Criteria for Metropolitan and Other Urban Areas

For metropolitan and other urban areas, the following five indicators are the most promising among the set of indicators we have analyzed using the 2010 HIES data:

Households that have no separate kitchen (13.4 percent of metropolitan and 24.9 percent of other urban households). Among these households, 37 percent in metropolitan areas and 30 percent in other urban areas belong to the poorest quintile (Figure 12).

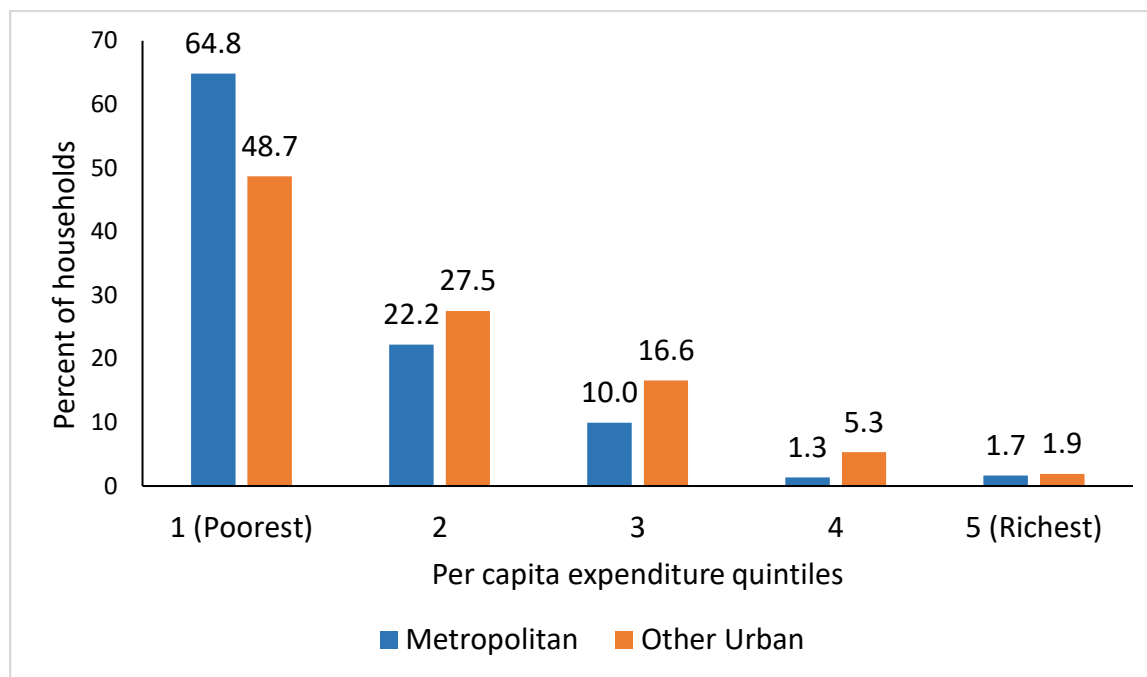
Figure 12 Percentage of households that has no separate kitchen (13.4 percent of metropolitan and 24.9 percent of other urban households) by income groups, 2010



Source: 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Households with no electricity connection (4.3 percent of all metropolitan and 18.7 other urban households). Among these households, 65 percent in metropolitan areas and 49 percent in other urban areas belong to the poorest quintile (Figure 13).

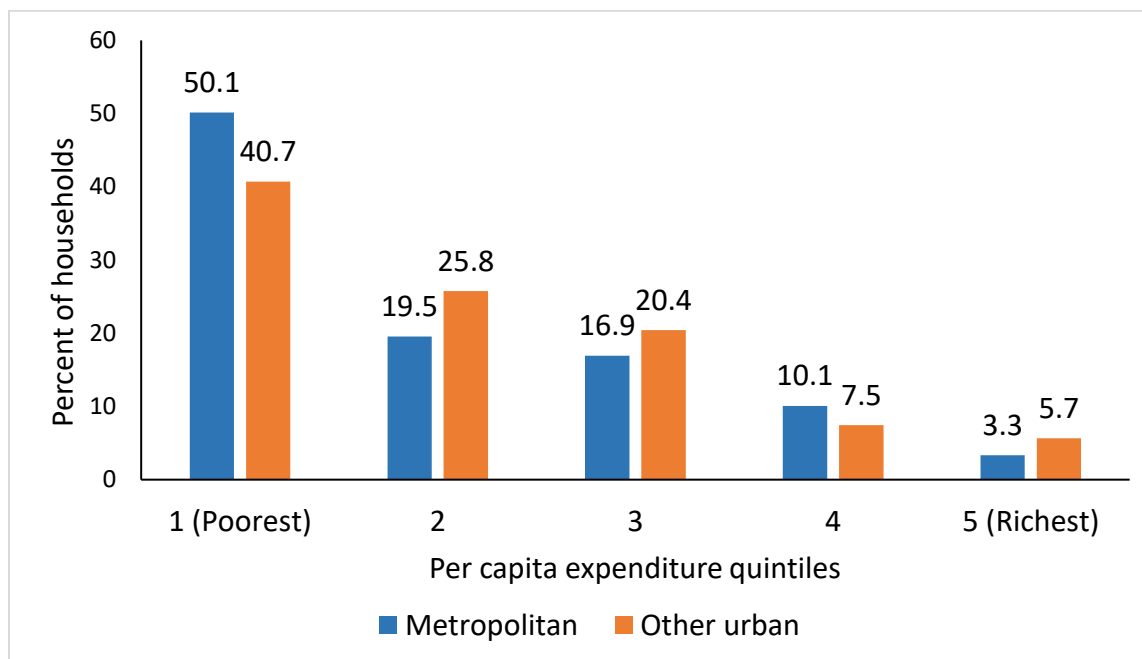
Figure 13 Percentage of households with no electricity connection (4.3 percent of all metropolitan and 18.7 other urban households) by income groups, 2010



Source: 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Households with walls made of hemp/hay/bamboo, etc. (10.1 percent of metropolitan and 13.9 percent of other urban households). Among these households, 50 percent in metropolitan areas and 41 percent in other urban areas belong to the poorest quintile. They are likely to be slum dwellers (Figure 14).

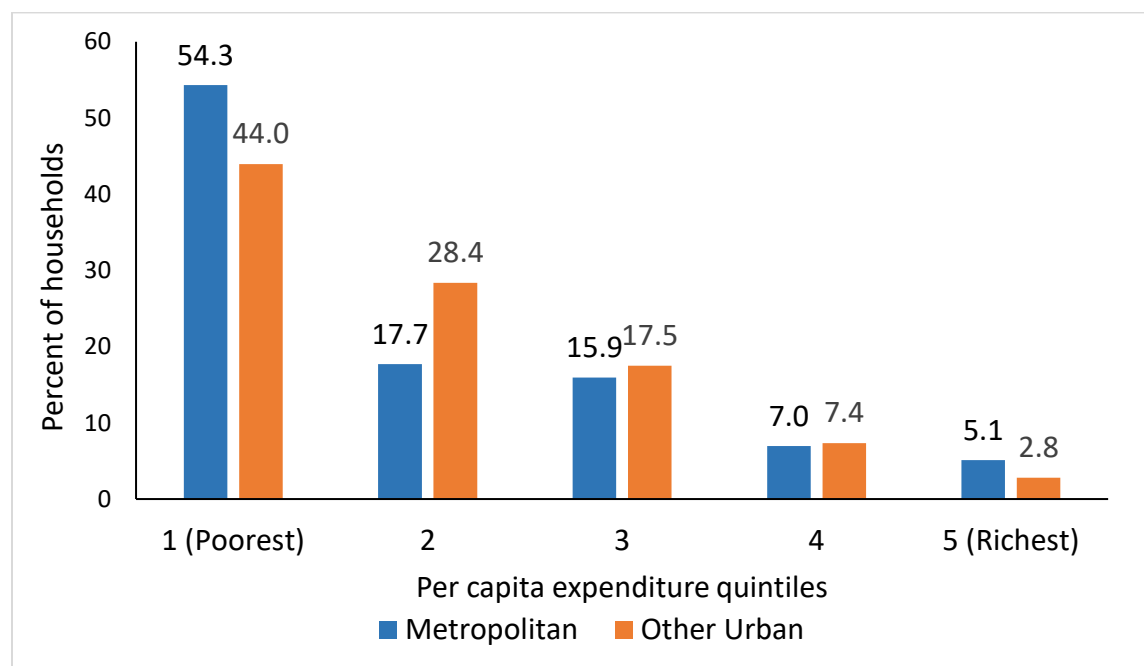
Figure 14 Percentage of households with walls made of hemp/hay/bamboo, etc. (10.1 percent of metropolitan and 13.9 percent of other urban households) by income groups, 2010



Source: 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Households with no electric fan (8.9 percent of all metropolitan and 26.3 percent of other urban households). Among these households, 54 percent in metropolitan areas and 44 percent in other urban areas belong to the poorest quintile (Figure 15).

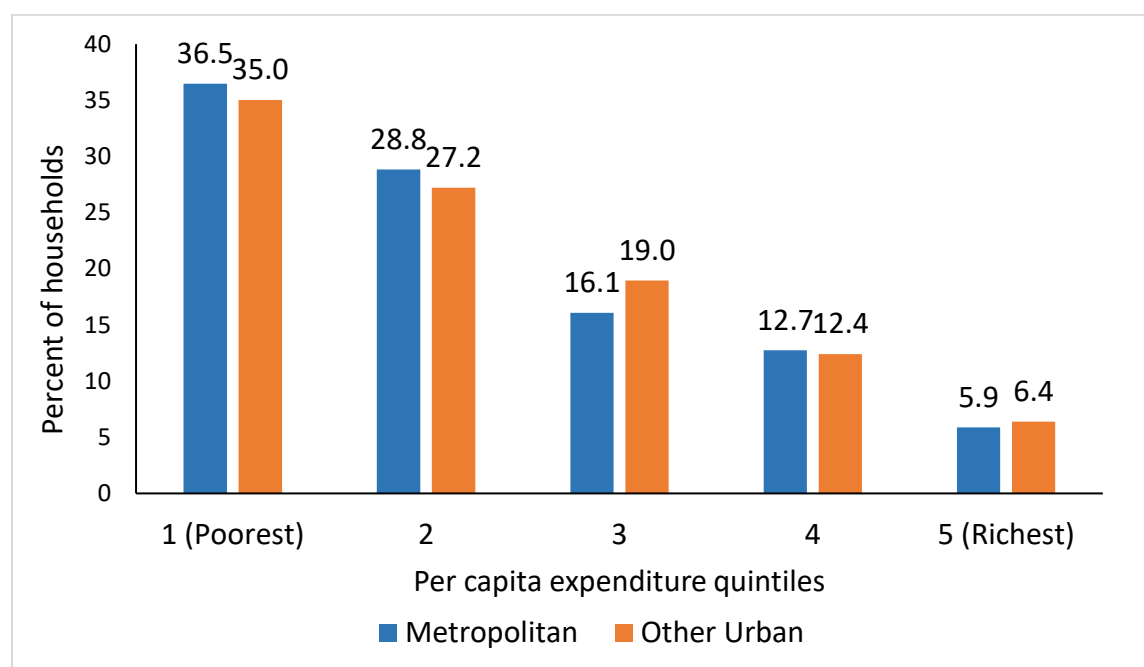
Figure 15 Percentage of households with no electric fan (8.9 percent of all metropolitan and 26.3 percent of other urban households) by income groups, 2010



Source: 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Households with no television (27.8 percent of all metropolitan and 42.5 percent of other urban households). Among these households, 37 percent in metropolitan areas and 35 percent in other urban areas belong to the poorest quintile (Figure 16).

Figure 16 Percentage of households with no television (27.8 percent of all metropolitan and 42.5 percent of other urban households) by income groups, 2010



Source: 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

7. Summary and Conclusions

Under the 2015 National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), the Government of Bangladesh decided to prioritize a national Child Benefit Program (CBP) to improve the nutrition of women during pregnancy, lactating mothers, and their children up to age four, using a lifecycle approach (GED 2015). Before launching the final CBP, the Government plans on taking an iterative approach, first integrating two existing cash-based social safety net programs—the rural Maternity Allowance (MA) and urban Lactating Mother Allowance (LMA) programs—into a single program, the Improved Maternity and Lactating Mother Allowance Program (IMLMA). The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) plans to implement this improved program nationally in rural and urban Bangladesh, which is intended to provide lessons to guide the design of the national CBP.

Targeting a national social protection program like CBP, which will operate across broad variations in context, raises challenges. In Bangladesh, the determinants of poverty are quite different between rural and urban areas. Given this context, the purpose of this assessment is to strengthen the empirical basis upon which policymakers can make informed policy choices to refine the targeting mechanisms of the existing MA and LMA programs so that the combined program can effectively target the neediest families in rural and urban areas.

Under this study, we proposed six rural and five urban indicators that could strengthen the targeting performance of the combined IMLMA program. These observable and verifiable poverty indicators would serve the dual purpose of identifying both poor and undernourished women. Using these indicators as beneficiary selection criteria, a female applicant would be considered eligible if her household satisfies at least one of the proposed criteria.

Using evidence from two national household surveys, IFPRI proposed that the improved program may target rural households who do not have access to their own WASH-related infrastructure (specifically, private tubewell or private latrine), on an occupational basis (households whose main income earner is a rickshaw puller), those without electricity connection, those with house walls made of jute sticks/bamboo, and those without an electric fan. In metropolitan and other urban areas, IFPRI proposed that targeting households that lack access to electricity, lack specific electrical appliances (specifically, electric fan and television), those without a separate kitchen, and households with walls made of hemp/hay/bamboo may be effective in targeting the urban poor.

Combining some or all of these proposed pro-poor indicators may present an effective and cost-effective set of targeting criteria, and ultimately help the program achieve its policy objectives once it is scaled up nationally under the CBP.

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