

# Measuring Poverty & Gender Disparity: Emerging Findings from Fiji

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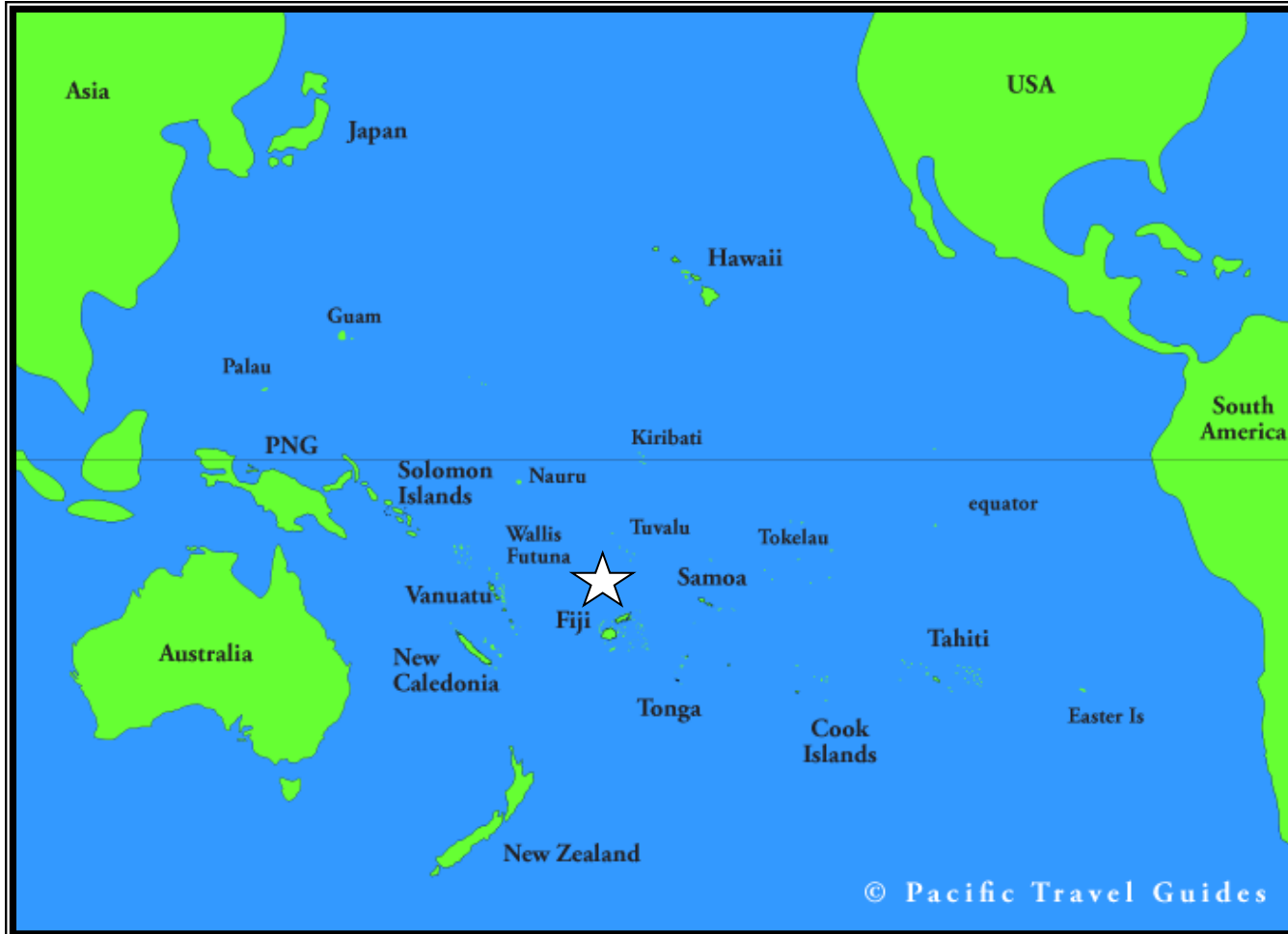
# Overview:



- **Country context- demography & statistics on poverty**
- **Research sites- socio eco context**
- **Research Methods & Sample**
- **Emerging themes & key findings- gender & generational poverty.**
- **Concluding reflections!**

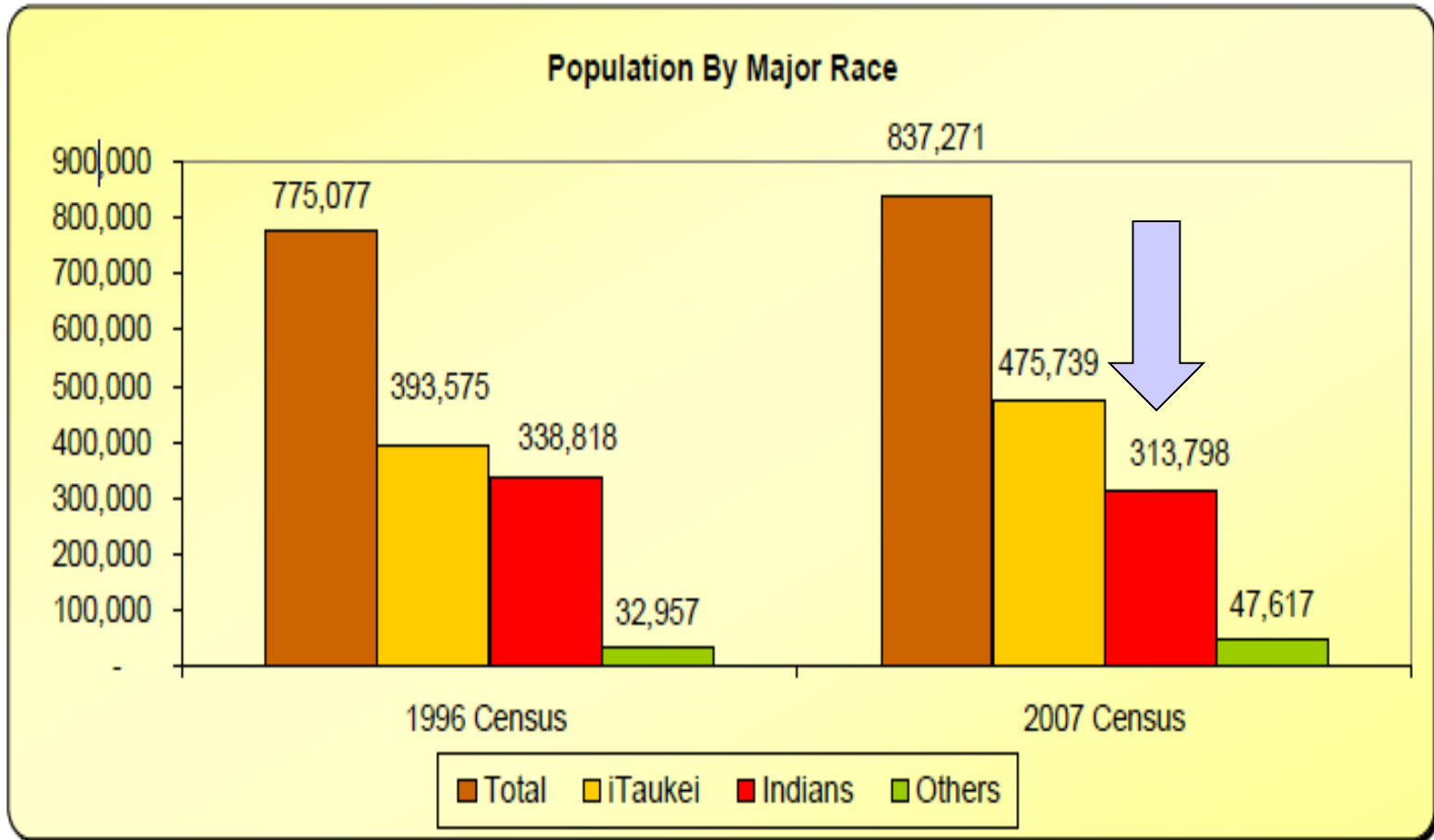


# So where is Fiji?



# Country Context:

Figure 1: Population Size & Ethnicity



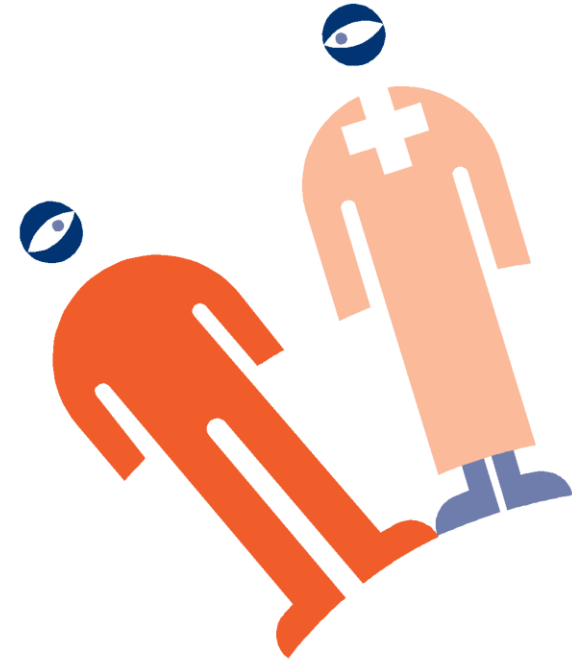
# Statistics on Incidence of Poverty

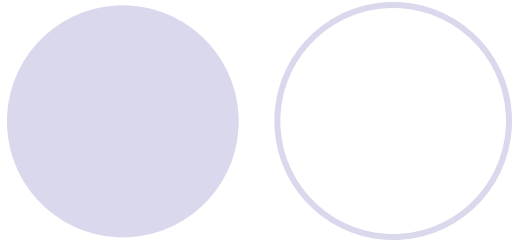
## Percentage of Population in Poverty

	2002-2003	2008-2009	% Change
Fiji	35%	31%	-10%
Urban	28%	19%	-34%
Rural	40%	43%	8%
iTaukei	35%	31%	-10%
Indo-Fijians	36%	32%	-11%
Others	24%	25%	4%

# What are the Gaps in Poverty Measurement?

- Household income/expenditure head count approach used to measure poverty.
- 'Feminization of poverty' - a recurrent theme in poverty discourses in Fiji.
- 'Household' model to estimate the number of people living below the poverty line (Basic Needs Poverty Line).
- This approach masks the extent of poverty among women and between men & women within the household
- Fails to look at poverty at the individual level- a cornerstone for gendered analysis.
- Intra-household dynamics is not easily captured in income-based approaches.
- And I see Fempov research filling in that gap!!



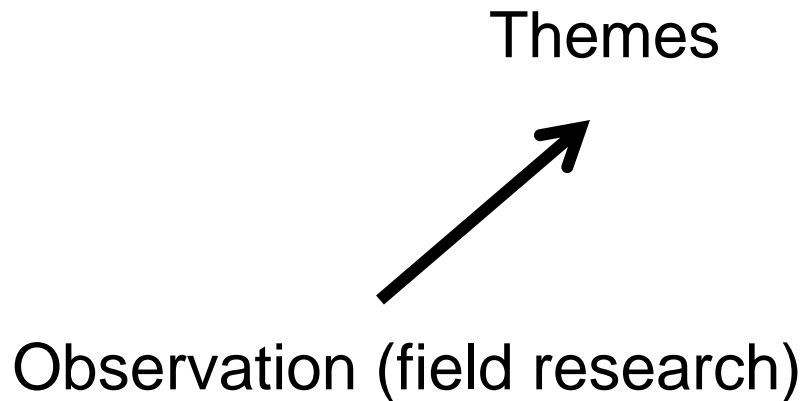


# **No single measure is sufficient to capture entrenched gender inequalities and poverty**

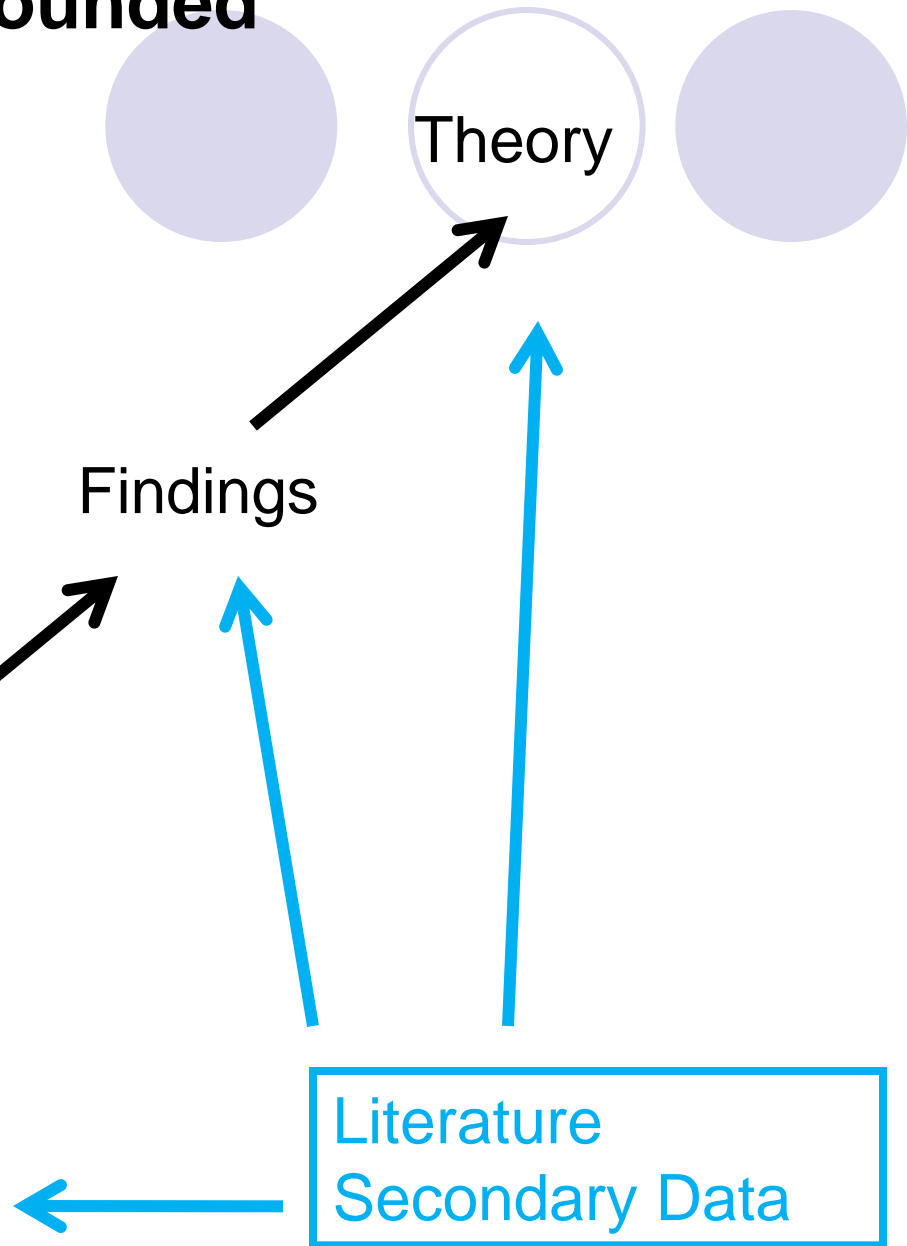
## **Some of the gendered dynamics emerged in the data:**

- Asset ownership
- access to opportunities (education)
- family & community networks
- how gender norms affect men (expectation to provide for family)
- different status of men and women in households affects distribution
- 'who gets what'

# Inductive Research – Grounded Theory Approach



*Source: S. Bessel, March 2010*





# Research Sites- 3 N's

- Selection of sites to represent major ethnic groups and mix of rural and urban locations:
  1. Rural community –(Fiji Indian participants)
  2. Urban community – (Indigenous Fijian participants)
  3. Marginalized community –(mixed group of indigenous Fijian and Fiji Indian participants)

# Rural site:



- Lack of accessibility to water, electricity and health services.
- Fiji Indian sugar cane farming community.
- Pressing insecurity- land lease expiry of sugar cane farms 5-10 yrs ago.
- Farmers became vulnerable to poverty.
- More poverty now than before- seasonal employment, declining sugarcane farms & yields, land insecurities.
- Common job- sugarcane laborers & cane cutters.
- Average income varies between \$10-40 per week.

# Urban



- Easy accessibility to health, schools & jobs.
- Pressing concern- surrounding land has been used for devt. of town, roads & bridge.
- Leading to poor drainage & sanitation – affecting sources of livelihood.
- Lack of land for subsistence & large scale farming – declining land rents for the village clan.
- Average weekly income- \$150.
- Common jobs- road constructions, salesperson, some are teachers and nurses, small canteens/village stores run by women.

# Squatter Settlement (urban)



- Most disadvantaged squatter settlement in city.
- Food security is the main concern.
- Prevalence of single parent families (widows, deserted mothers, grand mothers looking after grand kids).
- Weekly income- \$30 (mostly casual laborers & housemaids).
- High reliance on assistance from relatives, NGO support and social welfare assistance.
- Poor housing conditions- lack of access to water and electricity.
- High school drop out rates- kids become victims of “street culture”.
- Pressing socio-eco issues- robbery, theft, assaults, child abuse, alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, marijuana and glue sniffing.

# Research Methods & Sample

Methods	Rural	Urban	Marginalised
<b>Guided Group Discussions</b> -Adolescent (13-18 yrs) -Middle age (19-50 yrs) -Elderly (50+)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)
<b>Poverty Ladder</b> -Adolescent (13-18 yrs) -Middle age (19-50 yrs) -Elderly (50+)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)
<b>Ranking &amp; Brainstorm</b> -Adolescent (13-18 yrs) -Middle age (19-50 yrs) -Elderly (50+)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)
<b>Household Mapping</b> -Adolescent (13-18 yrs) -Middle age (19-50 yrs) -Elderly (50+)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)	8 Males 8 Females (6 groups of different age & gender cohorts)
Key Informant Interviews	6	6	6
<b>Total Sample Size</b> <b>N = 162</b>	<b>54 participants</b>	<b>54 participants</b>	<b>54 participants</b>

# Snapshots of Key Findings & Emerging themes

Definition of poverty?  
What constitutes poverty?  
Different levels of poverty?  
So is it really about gender!!

Farming inputs



# 1. Definition of Poverty



- *Physical appearance of a person, the type of clothes he or she is wearing- phata wata kapada”*
  - *Adult Male discussion group,*
- *“Housing is one condition to indicate if someone is poor or rich. Poor live in squatter housing conditions”*
  - *Adult Female discussion group,*
- *“No money. No food. Drink tea all the time. Not working. Clothes torn”*
  - *Adolescent male discussion group,*

## 2. What constitutes poverty?

- *“Sometimes children don't bring food to school or it's a repetition of the same food. For example, it may be pumpkin curry all week”.*

- *Adolescent Male discussion group,*

- *“People who always on their own wandering around e.g., sex workers – job that people do can show they have problems of poverty”.*

- *Adolescent Female discussion group,*

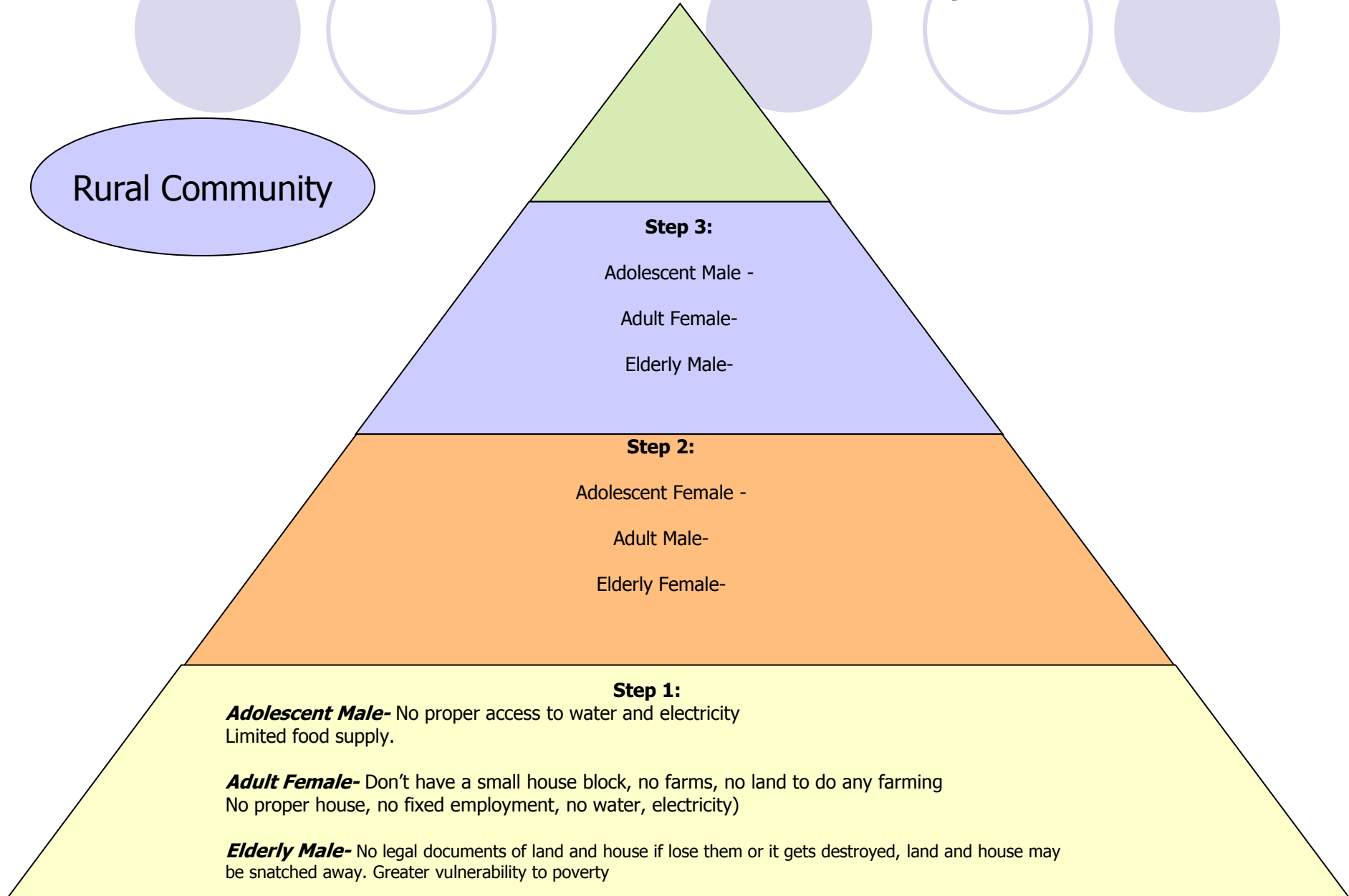
- *“If 3 kids - only one goes to school because of affordability. Some kids only go for school 2-3 days per week - cannot afford lunch, bus fare”.*

- *Adult Male discussion group,*



# 3. Different Levels of Poverty

Rural Community



## 4. Even Hopes & Aspirations Differ!

- *“We don’t have any land of our own where we can built a house and have a peaceful and secured life but my farmer is very helpful and because of her kindness we were able to have water supply and electricity in our house and my wife works as a housemaid and gets 25 to 30 dollars a week so we can survive”*  
- J.N.
- *“I feel depressed and frustrated but I’m still hopeful that one day I will be able to find a job so that I can support my family. I still want to study further so that it becomes a bit easy for me to find a job. I’m against getting married now or any time soon as I feel being a daughter, marriage is more expensive than a son. I’m hopeful that if I get married I want to marry a rich man so that I can have an enjoyable and a comfortable living”*  
- S.N.

# 5. Priorities to get out of poverty?

Priority Items	Community (discussion groups)							
	N1	N2	N3	N4	N5	N6	N7	N8
Agricultural support and agriculture	X	X						
Health services	X							X
Access to sea	X							
Ownership of land	X	X			X			
Responsive advisory councilor	X							
Education		X	X	X		X		
Food			X					X
Bank account			X					
Proper house and facilities				X	X			
Spiritual faith, belief & growth				X		X	X	
Access to water				X				X
Family support/provide support for children						X		
Money							X	X

Key: N1- adult male group, 19-49 ; N2- adult male, 19-49; N3- adolescent female 13-18; N4- adolescent female 13-18; N5- adult male, 50+ ; N6- adult male, 50+ ; N7- adult female group, 19-49 ; N8- adult female group, 19-49 .

# Gender Inequalities and Poverty

- Women and men noted the level of hardships faced by women-unpaid domestic chores.
- Intra-household disparities between men and women revolved around inequalities, unfairness in decision making on who spends & on what, division of distribution of resources and opportunities, freedom of movement.
- Investment on girls – education
- Social expectations of parents for boys to be potential breadwinners of the family!

# Concluding Reflections:



- Poverty is fluid and context specific- age & gender
- Not a permanent characteristic.
- Poor men & women take different initiatives to change their conditions.
- Poverty is not just about money.
- Men & women have different access to resources, opportunities and strengths of family & community networks to move out of poverty.

**Thank you for listening 😊**