

ADB



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Socio-Economic Empowerment Program in Sri Lanka

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Program Overview

- **Program Highlights**

1. Socio-economic context in Sri Lanka
2. Introduction of the socio-economic empowerment program in January 2023
3. Preparatory stage is near completion (national market assessment, national and local level stakeholder awareness, training of coaches).

- **Setup**

1. Ensuring the new social welfare beneficiaries are empowered and exit the welfare program
2. Program pillars include psychological well-being, social protection, financial inclusion, livelihoods/jobs/entrepreneurship
3. Implemented by the Department of Samurdhi Development (DSD) under the Ministry of Women, Child Affairs and Social Empowerment

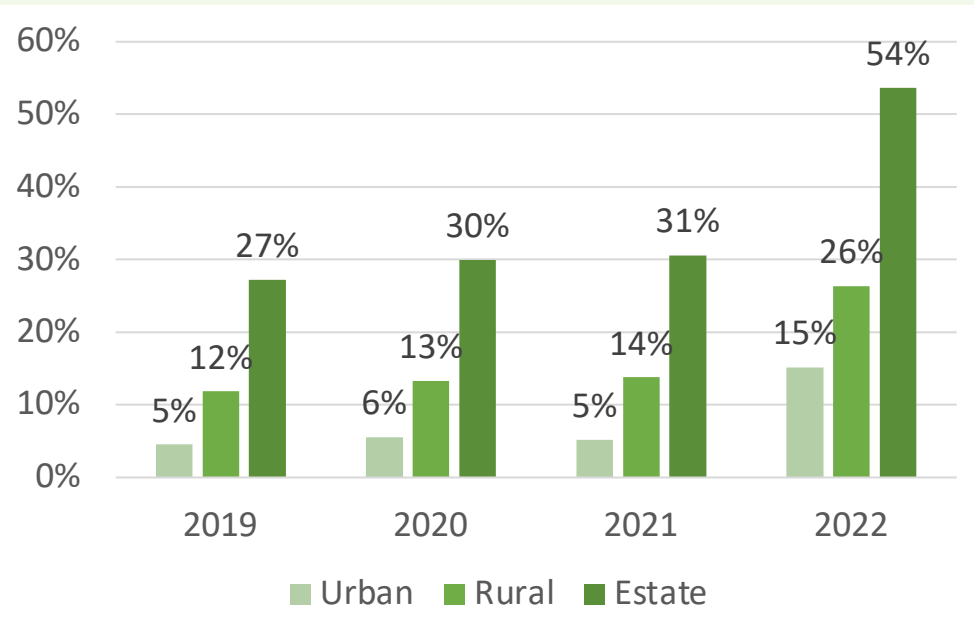
- **Scale**

1. Builds upon existing Samurdhi Development programs and the graduation pilot implemented by WB in 2021
2. Aims to reach nearly 50,000 beneficiaries of which at least 25,000 will receive cash or in-kind grants
3. National-level capacity building of DSD staff and other stakeholders to support the government's ambitious target
4. Coordination with WB's inclusive economic empowerment program



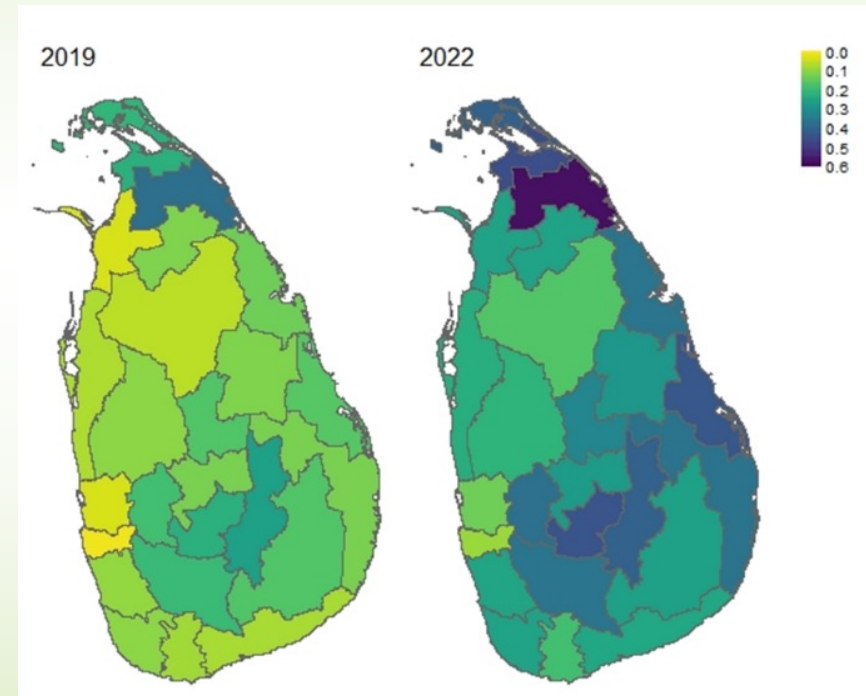
The poverty rate is expected to have increased significantly in 2022 to exceed 25%.

Estate poverty is the highest, but 80% of the poor in Sri Lanka are in rural areas



Source: HIES 2019 and WB simulations

Districts in the center and on the east coast are estimated to suffer more poverty



Government's Ambitious Plan for Economic Empowerment of the Poor

Empowering Family Unit		No of Families	Target and Time plan			
			2023	2024	2025	2026
1	(Poor)	800,000	100,000	350,000	250,000	100,000
2	(Severely Poor)	400,000	50,000	200,000	100,000	50,000
Total		1,200,000	150,000	550,000	350,000	150,000



Program Description

- **Main objective:** To empower the participants of the new social welfare program of the government with a focus on mental, social, and economic well-being to facilitate their exist from the public welfare program.
- **Who it targets:** Poor and extremely poor families of the new social welfare program
- **Program components**
 1. Psychological wellbeing of the family
 2. Holistic family development approach
 3. Income generation and diversification (skills, jobs, livelihood, entrepreneurship)
 4. Connecting rural economies with national/global value chains
 5. Inter-ministry and inter-agency coodination



Lessons from the Design

- **Main opportunities**

1. Lessons from WB graduation pilot in 2021
2. Institutionalization of socio-economic empowerment interventions
3. Build national and local level capacity of continuation and sustainability
4. Strong collaboration with WB, other DPs and CSOs
5. Responding to the negative impacts of Covid-19 and the economic crisis
6. Strong GESI focus (60% women, 20% FHH, 5% PWD, isolated locations)

- **Main challenges**

1. Longer preparation time due to ongoing social protection reforms
2. Facilitating inter-agency coordination
3. Uncertainties around institutional reform

- **Other features**

1. Development partner coordination, including WB
2. Building into the ADB pipeline



Research Questions

- Economic empowerment of the poor during economic reforms
- Implementing a nation-wide economic empowerment program
- Integrating climate-smart intervention
- Strengthening GESI and digital transformation



Thank You

