

# Food-insecure rural communities have reduced malnutrition through a multisector, rights-based community-driven approach'

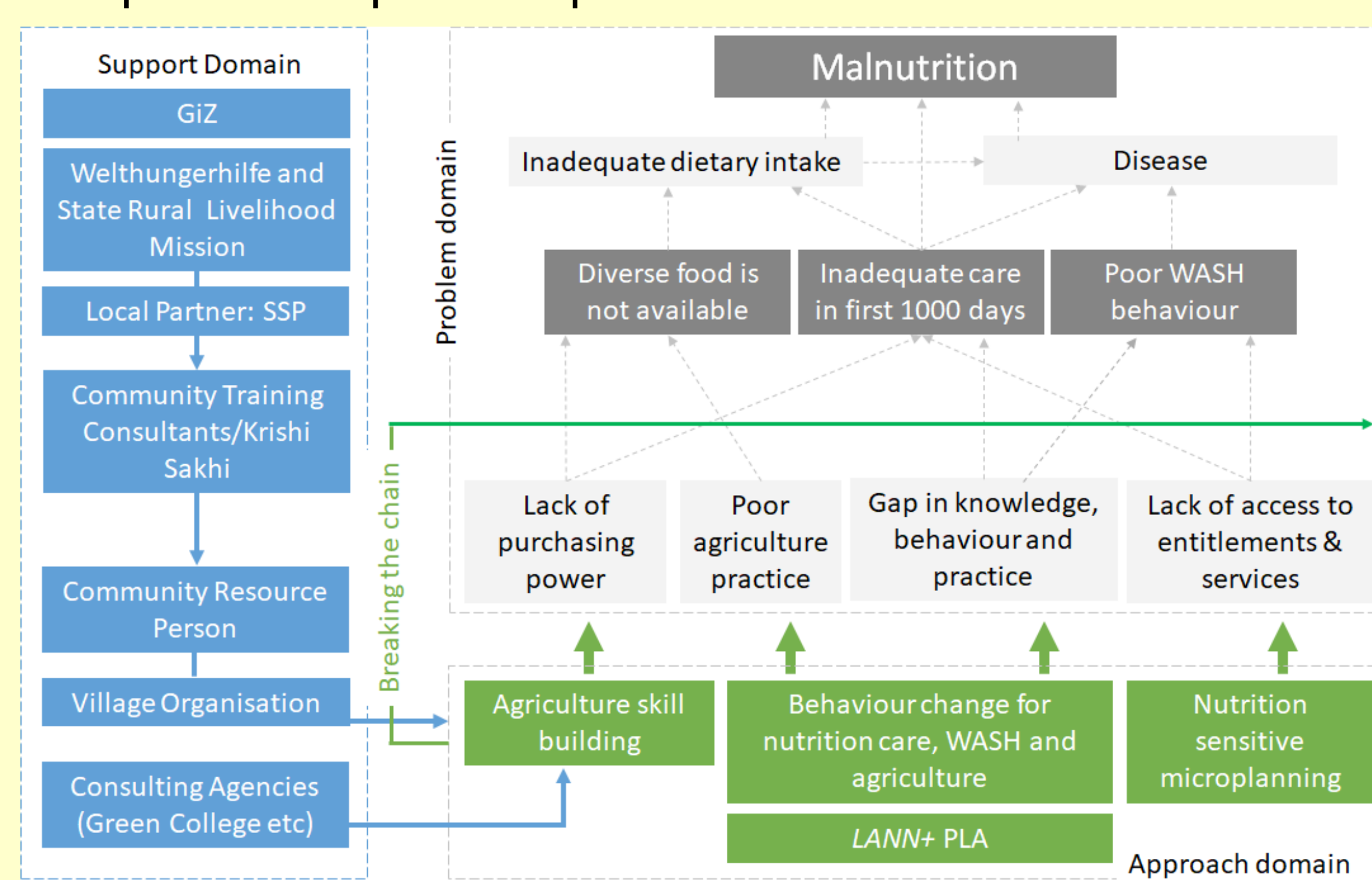
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## Assess the output of multisector approach on 4 major drivers of malnutrition in 2 years .

Nutrition-specific interventions address the immediate causes of malnutrition, but focus on nutrition-sensitive interventions which draw on complementary sectors like agriculture, maternal and child care, early child development, and WASH to affect the underlying determinants of malnutrition - including poverty, food insecurity, poor childcare practices , scarcity of adequate health and care resources, non-availability of clean water and sanitation services, is important for sustainable reduction of malnutrition.

This successful model has been further scaled up in cooperation with the Maharashtra State Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM) in 2 District to support food insecure communities in coping with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The MSRLM was approached with the idea of implementing a multisectoral strategy to address malnutrition, as this matches with the Rural Livelihoods Mission strategy very well. SRLM has a strong focus on agriculture, agriculture skill building, community development and nutrition.

The project was implemented in three blocks - Sillod & Soygaon blocks (Aurangabad district) and Jamkhed block(Ahmednagar district), covering a total of 100 villages. The key focus sectors were Agriculture and Nutrition, WASH, Convergence and entrepreneurship development.



The approach is mainly designed to shift underlying causes of chronic hunger and malnutrition and is based on following 4 interlocking strategies: (1) Foster behaviour change at household level; (2) Strengthen and support community-based institutions; (3) Activate and improve services at community level; and (4) Advocate and promote a multisectoral community-based implementation model for the Right to Adequate Food. 'Helping people to help themselves' is the guiding principle.

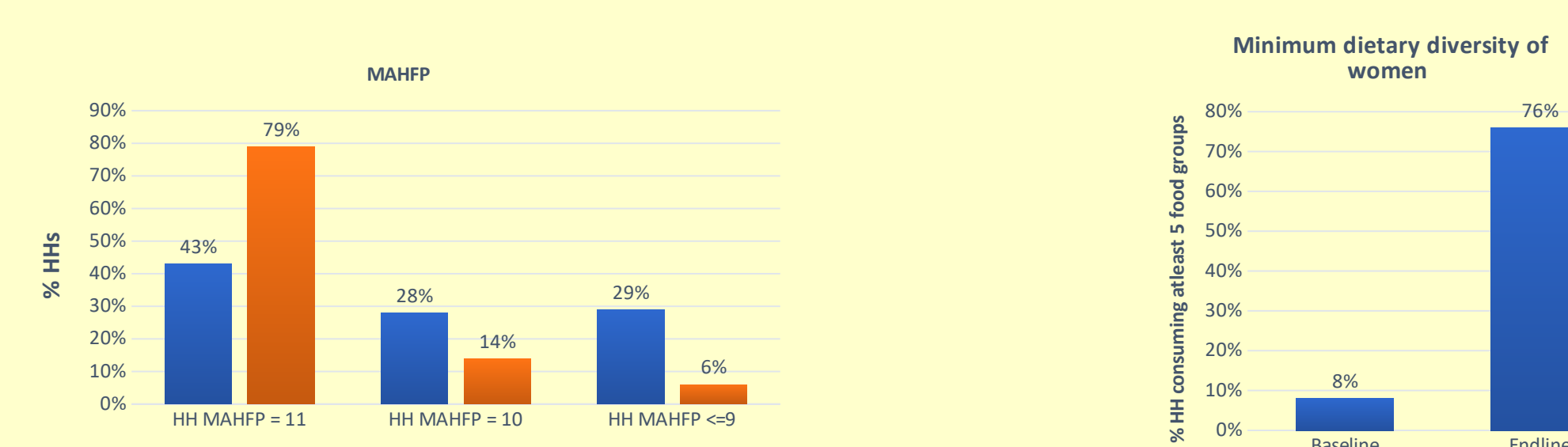
## Study methodology

survey data comprised data from a quantitative survey implemented with project participants across the target groups (marginal, landless families). The quantitative survey covered 40 randomly selected villages across three districts. The survey was conducted with 452 households. This was followed by FGDs in 7 villages to validate the findings.

4 major indicators measured were:

- Increased access to diverse food throughout the year.
- Access to safe drinking water & Safe sanitation, and improved handwashing practice
- Change in income.
- Empowerment.

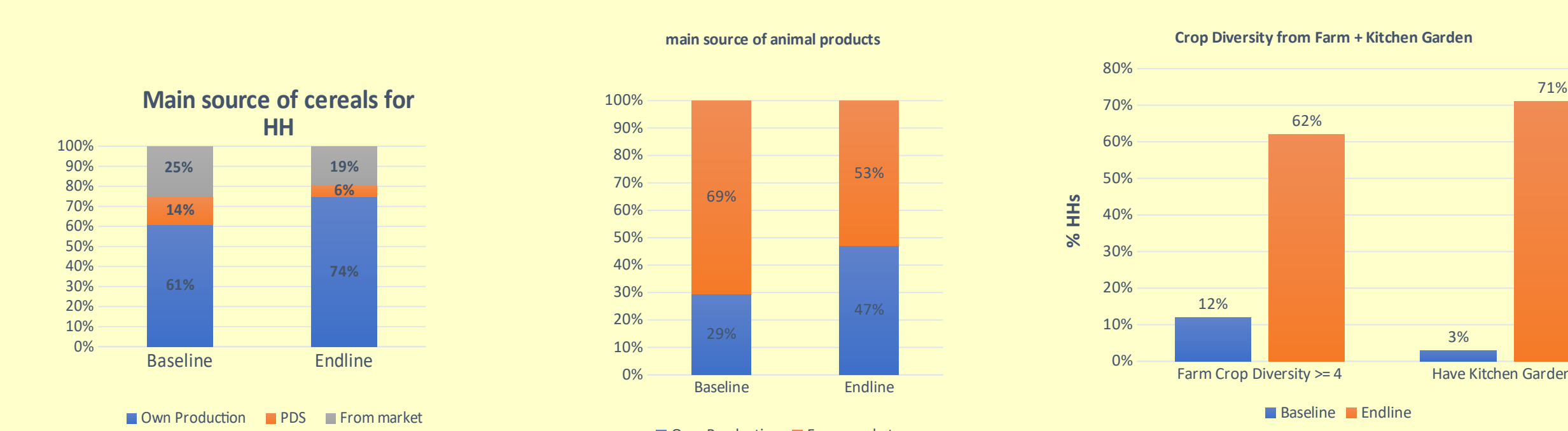
## Nutrition sensitive integrated farming systems



- 79% HH do not have any lean periods- baseline 43%
- 29% HH had 9 or more months of food shortage - endline 6%
- 76% of women are consuming five or more food groups compared to 8% at the baseline.

## Reasons for change

Dietary diversity of women increased due to awareness about food groups, importance of women eating together with family and linkage between nutrition, agriculture and natural resource management. Low input cost, agroecological farming methods & availability of 4-5 food groups from own farms. Finally, inclusion of animals, use of organic fertiliser & organic pesticides on the farm. Excess, production has also been sold in the local markethere.



## Women Empowerment

Sangeeta Sabale, from in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, is a young leader who has helped mobilise a Farmer Producer Group of 30 women members in her village. An aspiring entrepreneur too, she is successfully operating her own vermi compost unit and selling organic vegetables. She manages her 3.5-acre farm by herself, the men in her family have taken up jobs as there was low income from agriculture. Her income has increased from a previous earning of Rs 50,000 - 60,000 per year to around Rs 1,30,000 per year from sale of vegetables and other crops. She has also started selling surplus vermi compost and earthworms to other farmers.



Archana Ware is one of the group leaders who has received a certificate for their work towards developing the village's GPDP. She is also been selected as a CRP with MSRLM, and receives a monthly honorarium based on the task performed by her. Traditionally, the members of her village work as agricultural labour for harvesting sugarcane and migrate within Maharashtra and other states like Karnataka, etc. for 6-7 months in a year. She has started rearing country chickens and is now earning Rs5000 per month by selling eggs. She now has 200 hens. Under her leadership the women group have initiated State Transport bus service in the village, new childcare centre (Anganwadi), improve roads & drinking water supply.



Anjana bai Murlidhar Dhond, aged 41, belongs to the drought-prone hilly terrain in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra, in Marathwada region. A large number of families in the village including Anjanabai's cultivate a variety of pulses, but since the village has no pulse mills, they travel 25-30 km to the nearest dal mill to get the pulse milled. Anjana bai convinced her husband too and in December 2021 they invested Rs 30,000 to purchase a basic model of multi-purpose dal milling unit, which could process various pulses. In just the first 3 months, more than 150 farmers got pulses processed at the mill. Anjana bai charges a very affordable Rs 3 /kg. In the previous year Anjana bai earned around Rs 65,000 - 70,000 by way of milling charges and selling processed dal, of which around Rs27,000 is from milling charges only. She gets an additional income (of Rs 12/kg) from the leftover husk & broken dal pieces, which is picked up by dairy farmers for use as cattle feed. Breaking the stereotype, Anjali Bai is responsible for marketing and business management her husband works in the mill with her.





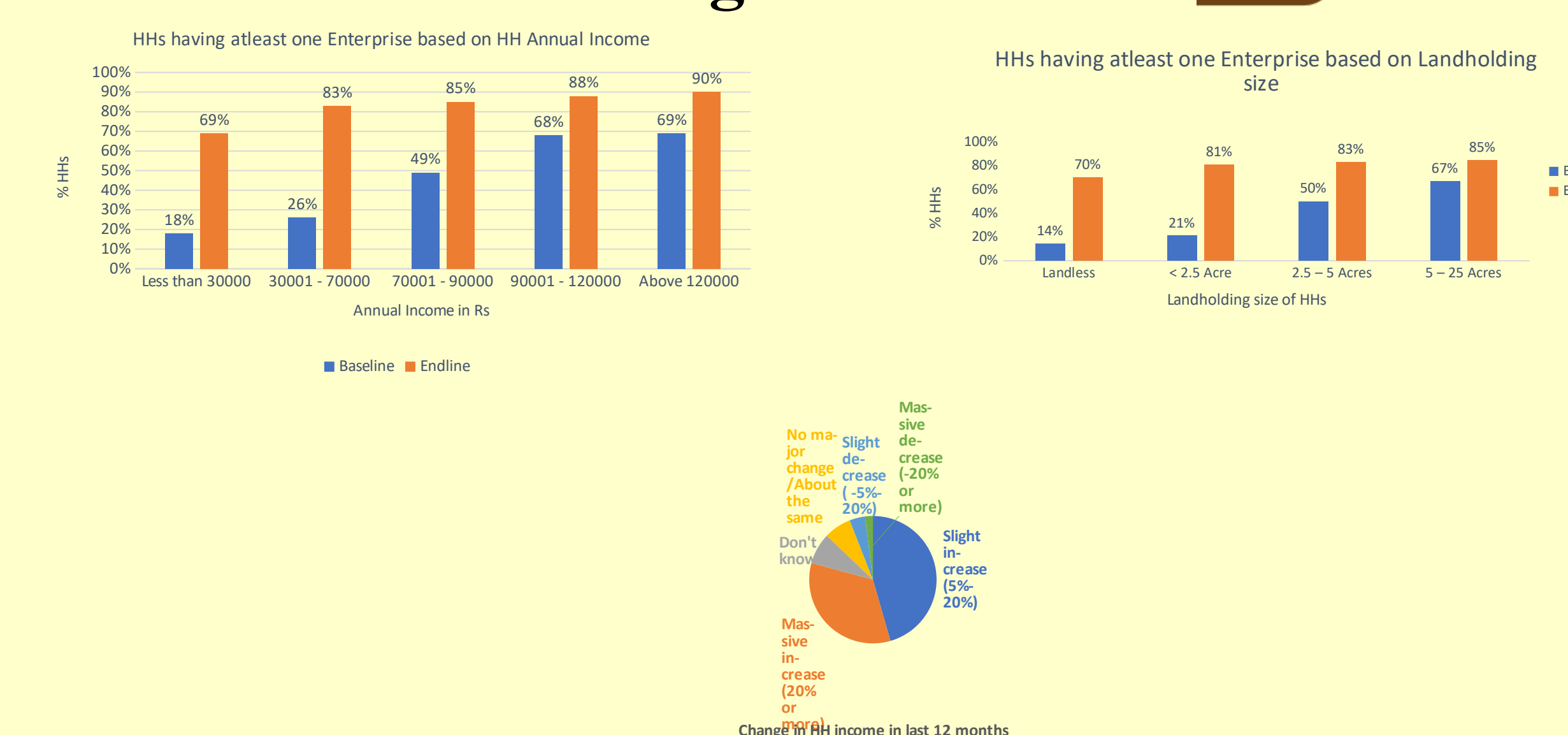
## Access to safe drinking water & Safe sanitation

Hand Washing Practices - using soap (% HH)	Baseline	Endline
HHs using some form of soap for handwashing	89%	64%
After using toilet	85%	98%
Before preparing food	52%	93%
Before eating food	67%	92%
After eating food	21%	90%
Before praying	11%	72%
After cooking food	8%	85%
After handling animals	33%	68%
After work	67%	63%

- The number of HHs having a toilet facility has increased from 71% HHs in baseline to 80% HHs in endline.
- HHs having toilets, and using toilets regularly stands at 98% in comparison to 90% HHs who had reported using the toilet regularly.
- However, 20% of HHs still have no toilets in their homes..

Use of safe drinking was 91% but the water source was faraway, so women had to spend substantial time on collection of water. Active participation of women in Gram Panchayat. Village assembly (Gram Panchayat) has installed Water Filter Plants in some villages.

## Change in income.



## SUB-HEADING (e.g., IMPLICATIONS)

- HHs have taken up new agri-allied enterprises or expanded their earlier enterprise for additional income. Three main enterprises that increased are:
- Micro dal (pulse) mills - a micro-dal unit has been set-up which (see case study) is used by villagers for milling dal (otherwise they do hand milling).
    - Some women are making dal, popcorn, which they sell locally. The packing machine is available in the village. In a month, they sell about 20-30 kgs.
  - Vegetable sale along with Vermi compost production and sale
    - Several HHs are selling vegetables.
    - Vermicompost is mainly used for their own farm / kitchen garden but also sold in some cases.
  - Food processing units – mainly peanut laddoo, chikki and other healthy snacks.
    - During visits, it was seen that some SHGs supplies Peanut laddoo to Anganwadi.
    - Some enterprises related to food preservation - Shevai, papad have been promoted.