



# Comparative Perspectives: Gendered Dimensions of Wellbeing

Findings from an exploratory study carried out in  
Badulla District, Sri Lanka

Sanjeewanie Kariyawasam

September 2013

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**The Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA)** is an independent, Sri Lankan think-tank promoting a better understanding of poverty-related development issues. CEPA believes that poverty is an injustice that should be overcome and that overcoming poverty involves changing policies and practices nationally and internationally, as well as working with people in poverty. At CEPA our emphasis is on providing independent analysis, capacity building of development actors, and seeking opportunities for policy influence. We are influenced by a strong orientation towards service provision that is grounded in sound empirical evidence while responding to the needs of the market. CEPA maintains this market orientation through client requests, while pursuing a parallel independent research agenda based on five broad thematic areas: post conflict development, vulnerability, migration, infrastructure and the environment. Ultimately, CEPA strives to contribute to influencing poverty-related development policy at national, regional, sectoral, programme and project levels.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on PEP, see [www.pep-net.org](http://www.pep-net.org)

<sup>2</sup> For more information on "missing dimensions of poverty" see [www. ophi.org.uk](http://www.ophi.org.uk)

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## Executive Summary

This paper explores how men and women experience non material wellbeing (Mental wellbeing) in the Sri Lankan context.

The concept of Mental wellbeing is an important dimension of the multi-dimensional phenomenon of poverty. The growing criticism of the wellbeing discourse is that, being well should not be understood exclusively as material wellbeing, since non-material wellbeing (Mental wellbeing) is the end result of achieving the material aspects of wellbeing. Hence, happiness and wellbeing are often considered the end goals of development. Many studies have shown that income and happiness are not linked above very low levels of income, and as a result, there has been a growing interest among both researchers and policymakers in the non material dimensions of wellbeing.

The growing awareness that income and consumption may be inadequate measures of wellbeing has also promoted a substantial interest in directly measuring wellbeing, which has often taken the form of direct questions on happiness. Multi-dimensional poverty analyses identify a number of relevant indicators which have evolved over time that range from economic and social indicators to psychological indicators of poverty such as Mental wellbeing. However, there is still a lack of internationally comparable data at individual/household level to understand the complex nature of deprivation. Additionally, measuring happiness in a survey setting is fraught with a number of methodological drawbacks, the main one being a lack of robustness in the responses.

In an attempt to address these drawbacks a module, developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) using subjective indicators as well as psychological or mental health indicators, was piloted in the Badulla District of Sri Lanka. The module yielded a rich dataset that measures and understands the dimension of Mental wellbeing in the Sri Lankan context.

This paper draws on the survey data to explore the relationship between wellbeing and gender, and finds that over 97% of the population in Badulla, have satisfactory levels of Mental wellbeing. But it also reveals interesting differences between the way men and women experience Mental wellbeing. The study highlights that women are more psychologically balanced but report lower levels of Subjective wellbeing than men. Unhappiness among women was mainly linked with household socio-economic characteristics, such as income, employment status and children. Among men, the study found that unhappiness was chiefly linked to employment. This suggests that Mental wellbeing may be linked to traditional gender roles and expectations in Sri Lanka. These differences highlight the effects of socialisation and the way it impacts the way men and women experience happiness. The paper attempts to discuss and explain these results in relation to what is known about gender roles and expectations in Sri Lankan society.

Understanding gender differences in Mental wellbeing also helps to understand the social inequalities and hierarchies associated with men and women within the social systems of society. Within those social systems, men and women can be affected by differences in the allocation of resources, distribution of power and opportunity structures. Therefore, understanding and studying gender differences would be of immense use when designing programmes and policies to empower individuals to achieve wellbeing.





## 1. Introduction

The concept of gender is distinct from sex. Sex is defined as the “physical and physiological features that differentiate males and females” (Kuumba, 2001, p. 9). In contrast gender is a social construct “the expected characteristics, norms, and behaviours associated with being male and female in any specific social context” (Kuumba, 2001, p. 9). These differences between males and females operate across different dimensions of wellbeing such as economy, religion, political systems, education, culture etc. in society. They also interact with other systems of social differentiation such as race, ethnicity, class and sexuality (Kuumba, 2001, p. 9).



The concept of wellbeing is similarly complex. It has been defined in many ways; and measurements to assess wellbeing have been proposed based on those definitions (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Some scholars have identified wellbeing as being psychologically healthy or having a good mental life, which distinguishes it from other approaches such as Material wellbeing (Hori, 2010). Material wellbeing is based on the commodities one possesses, what that person succeeds in doing with the commodities (functioning), or of the utility (happiness or desire fulfillment) that the commodities give the person (Saith & Harris, 1998). The growing criticism of this wellbeing discourse is that being well should not be understood exclusively as material wellbeing, since non material wellbeing (Mental wellbeing) is the end result of achieving material aspects of wellbeing (Samman, 2007).

Studies suggest that there is a gender difference in Mental wellbeing (Umberson *et al.*, 1996, pp. 837-857) For example, relationships affect the Mental wellbeing of men and women differently. Umberson *et al.*, (1996) have shown that social support<sup>3</sup> and social integration<sup>4</sup> have different effects on the relationships of men and women. Some studies have concluded that women have larger social networks<sup>5</sup> than men, but recent studies suggest that social

<sup>3</sup>Social support - is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people, and that one is part of a supportive social network. These supportive resources can be emotional (e.g. nurture), tangible (e.g. financial assistance), informational (e.g. advice), or companionship (e.g. sense of belonging).

<sup>4</sup>Social integration - refers to the principles by which individuals or actors are related to one another in a society.

<sup>5</sup>Social networks - refers to the structures existing among a set of relationships. It is a social structure made up of a set of actors.

networks for both men and women are similar (Veroff, Kulka, & Douvan, 1981 quoted in Umberson *et al.*, 1996). Interestingly, there are studies reporting that women are more likely to have emotionally intimate relationships, whereas men have more ties with formal associations (Moore 1990, quoted in Umberson *et al.*, 1996). These studies show that females receive more social support from their co-workers, friends and family than men, but that females exhibit higher rates of depression compared to males; this is thought to be due to traditional gender role expectations<sup>6</sup> (Rosenfield, 1980). Many studies point out that, women's roles and responsibilities are often seen as more demanding and less rewarding than men's roles, and therefore more conducive to depression (Umberson *et al.*, 1996, pp. 837-857). Furthermore, these differences are explained as a result of socialisation<sup>7</sup> processes for each gender, which seem to result in different styles of expressing frustration or negative states of mind (Hori, 2010).

Understanding gender differences in Mental wellbeing, if they exist, are important due to various efforts being made in recent times to empower individuals to achieve self - actualisation<sup>8</sup> and utilise their full potential (Roothman *et al.*, 2003). Gender differences also express social inequalities and hierarchies associated with men and women in social systems of society. Within those social systems, men and women can be affected by differences in the allocation of resources, distribution of power and opportunity structures (Kuumba, 2001, p. 9). Gender differences can also be varied across cultures and over time. Therefore, understanding and studying gender differences would be useful in designing programmes and policies to empower individuals to achieve wellbeing.

This paper draws on a recent study of multi-dimensional poverty carried out by the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), in Badulla District, Sri Lanka, to examine male / female differences in experiencing Mental wellbeing. The survey questionnaire was adapted from the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative's (OPHI)'s missing dimensions of poverty module<sup>9</sup>. Two aspects of Mental wellbeing, Psychological wellbeing and Subjective wellbeing are considered, as suggested by Samman (2007), to explore the effects of gender on individual's happiness and life satisfaction.

This paper is structured as follows: section 2 provides an overview of how Mental wellbeing has been measured over time, focusing on the evolution and critiques of the measurements. Section 3 provides an overview of the theoretical frame work of this study, introducing the data sources for this analysis, the survey questionnaire and measurement methodology used. Section 4 contains the results of gendered analysis of Psychological and Subjective wellbeing and section 5 discusses the findings. Section 6 concludes by considering the implications of this analysis.

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<sup>6</sup>Gender roles are expectations of how a person should act, dress, and talk etc. Based on sex, the traditional gender role expectations are; the man earns the money and the woman takes care of the home and children.

<sup>7</sup>Socialisation - process by which a person acquires a sense of self identity and learns expectations of society that will hold that individual accountable.

<sup>8</sup>Self-actualisation is a term coined by psychologist Abraham Maslow to describe the ongoing process of fully developing your personal potential. The first thing to note about self-actualisation is that it is a process not a goal. In other words, self-actualisation is not something that you aim for: it is something that you do. The second thing to note is that self-actualisation is not restricted to high-profile, high-achieving individuals; you don't have to be famous to self-actualise.

<sup>9</sup>For more information on "missing dimensions of poverty", see [www.ophi.org.uk](http://www.ophi.org.uk)

## 2. Mental wellbeing and its measures

Historically, Mental wellbeing was mainly understood and evaluated in subjective terms. The most common definition of Mental wellbeing is the hedonic view propounded by Aristippus, a Greek philosopher, and, subsequent utilitarian philosophers, who believed that the goal of life is to experience maximum pleasure, and avoid pain. In psychology, hedonic wellbeing is defined as human happiness and pleasures of the mind, and its focus is to find the good or bad elements of life in order to maximise happiness (Kahneman *et al.* 1999 quoted in Hori, 2010). An American psychologist, Professor Edward Diener (1984), further developed the idea of happiness and proposed the concept of Subjective wellbeing (Hori, 2010).



The subjective definition of Mental wellbeing emphasises individuals' preferences, interests, ideals, values, and attitudes (Schimmack, 2009). It comprises satisfaction with life events, external but relevant factors like work, family, friends and the presence of joy along with the absence of negative effects and evaluates people's emotional responses (Joshi, 2010). Subjective wellbeing consists of two distinct components: a hedonic evaluation of positive and negative effects<sup>10</sup> of experiences and a cognitive evaluation of respondents' satisfaction with life (Diener, 1984). Hence, Subjective wellbeing is an individual's emotional and cognitive interpretation and evaluation of their own life. Although Subjective wellbeing has been categorised as a hedonic measure, there is still debate as to whether the satisfaction with life component in itself is exclusively hedonic as it underlines the psychological realities of human existence (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005).

Although, measures of Subjective wellbeing have been commonly used, they have been the subject of debate for many years. The critique is that they only cover one side of Mental wellbeing, i.e. hedonism and fail to capture the philosophical complexity of the true meaning of Mental wellbeing. They fail to factor elements such as meaning, purpose and personal expressiveness and miss considering whether a person can be truly fulfilled without knowing the meaning of their existence. A number of psychological studies have shown that there are other dimensions which are correlated but distinct from Subjective wellbeing, such as meaning and personal growth (Compton, *et al.*, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> Positive and negative affects - pleasurable and unpleasurable emotions and moods

In response to the criticisms of the hedonic approach of wellbeing, is the recent rise of the eudaimonic approach. This approach also derives from Hellenic philosophy, specifically that of Socrates and Aristotle. In this concept, there is strong consensus that virtue<sup>11</sup> is necessary to achieve eudaimonia, a wellbeing that consists of more than mere pleasure, but in the realisation of one's true nature (Waterman, 1993). According to Socrates, a person who is not virtuous cannot be happy, and a person with virtue cannot fail to be happy. Aristotle also agrees that eudaimonia is not achieved through pleasure but through a life of virtue, although their notions of virtues differ slightly. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, written in 350 B.C. stated that realising human potential is the ultimate human goal (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

This idea was further developed in history by prominent thinkers, such as the Stoics, who stressed the value of self-discipline, and John Locke, who argued that happiness is pursued through prudence<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, the modern eudaemonist, philosopher, Waterman argued that human wellness is linked to personal growth and development (Waterman, *et al.*, 2008).

In the recent past, Psychology professor, Carol Ryff (1995) concluded that "eudemonia involves activities that are goal directed and have purpose. Most importantly, the essential end point is to achieve the best that is within us". Ryff advocates eudaimonia through the concept of Psychological wellbeing. She analysed many different approaches to happiness and concluded that wellbeing should be seen as consisting of six components: self-acceptance (positive evaluation of oneself and one's life), personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery (the capacity to effectively manage one's life and the surrounding environment) and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Furthermore, Ryff showed that these six components positively influence mental and physical health, which Subjective wellbeing did not necessarily contribute to (Hori, 2010).

Therefore in recent years some psychologists have drawn a philosophical distinction as a frame work of Mental wellbeing: Subjective wellbeing from the hedonic approach; that derived from a life well lived; and Psychological wellbeing from the eudaimonic approach; a life composed of moral virtue, reason and self development (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Although the indicators of Subjective and Psychological wellbeing are distinct, they seem to depend on each other. The studies have shown that these two approaches are complementary but different to each other.

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<sup>11</sup>Virtue - that is, in doing what is worth doing (Ryan and Deci, 2001)

<sup>12</sup>Prudence - the shortest definition of prudence is *recta ratio agibilium* - right reason about things to be done. Prudence is not theoretical knowledge, such as philosophical wisdom, but practical knowledge. Prudence is not concerned only with universal and unchanging truths, but also with the singular, unique and variable things of daily life. A person can be wise when he reasons about the meaning and purpose of life, yet because of inexperience he cannot yet make good decisions in real-life situations. He must know how to apply universal principles in daily situations. A person who possesses prudence cannot easily impart to others his art of making good decisions.



### 3. Overview of the theoretical frame work and study methodology

The deprivation of Mental wellbeing has been recognised in the multi-dimensional phenomenon of poverty<sup>13</sup>. Multi-dimensional poverty analyses identify a number of relevant dimensions of wellbeing and indicators which have evolved over time from economic indicators to social indicators to psychological indicators of poverty such as Mental wellbeing. However, there is still a lack of internationally comparable data at individual/household level to understand the complex nature of deprivation. To address this gap, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has identified possible indicators and measures for five key dimensions, including Mental wellbeing, which are largely neglected in national surveys and human development studies. These five 'missing dimensions' of poverty are employment quality, empowerment, physical safety, shame and humiliation, and Psychological and Subjective wellbeing. The OPHI, therefore, designed a questionnaire module that can be integrated into national household surveys and which was piloted in three countries, Nigeria, Chad and Sri Lanka, in 2009/2010.



In Sri Lanka, the pilot survey was carried out in the Badulla district, which contains all three sectoral divisions, urban, rural and estate, and is one of the poorer districts in the country, with varying levels of consumption poverty rates ranging from 17.19% to 51.15% (headcount ratios), indicating a diverse spread of poverty in the region.

The data was collected mainly from a household survey, which was preceded by a series of Key Person Interviews and Focus Group Discussions to explore the relevance of the dimensions and indicators in the Sri Lankan context. The methodology adopted was mixed method, and included both quantitative and limited qualitative data gathering and analysis. The household data collection was done through OPHI's 'missing dimensions' module, adapted to the Sri Lankan context<sup>14</sup>. Using stratified random sampling techniques 260 households were sampled, and stratification was done to select the administrative areas within Badulla and households were selected for interview through a systematic random selection; every fifth house was selected using the right hand rule. This household survey was representative at the district and sectoral levels<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> The general consensus of, the deprivation or lack of wellbeing is poverty (Gunawardena, 2004, p 10).

<sup>14</sup> A copy of the household survey script can be found at <http://www.ophi.org.uk/research/missing-dimensions/projects/>.

<sup>15</sup> Sample was weighted to increase the number of urban households to more than 30.

**Table 1: Sample profile**

Sample distribution by sector	Male	Female	Total in the sample *	Total in Badulla District **
Estate sector	25%	16%	20%	20%
Rural sector	70%	75%	73%	73%
Urban sector	5%	8%	7%	7%
Gender distribution within the sample	45%	55%	NA	NA
Respondents without employment	20%	73%	49%	NA
Respondents with households per capita income below poverty line ***	52%	51%	52% <sup>16</sup>	24% <sup>17</sup>
Respondents where education below secondary school	30%	34%	32%	NA

\* Weighted sample, to obtain district level representativeness Source: *Household Survey Results CEPA, 2010*

\*\* Source: *DCS 2007; and DCS 2009*

\*\*\* Rs. 3079 - District Poverty Line as at January 2010 to coincide with period of survey data collection

The respondent in each case was the head of the household or the spouse, and an effort was made to obtain a spread of male and female respondents. In all, 229 interviews were completed. This paper uses the data gathered from the pilot survey to analyse deprivation in mental wellbeing as two distinct topics: Psychological and Subjective wellbeing as suggested in the literature. The indicators for this dimension were selected based on the OPHI working paper<sup>18</sup> and the primary analysis unit is the individual, i.e. the respondent.

This analysis aims to:

- 1) provide internal and external validity of the questions proposed in the module. The external validation is to ensure that the questions are in fact seeking the concepts they purport to measure through qualitative work, and the internal validation is to understand the relationships between indicators through statistical analysis,
- 2) describe levels of and the distribution of Psychological and Subjective wellbeing within the sample by gender,
- 3) generate a composite measure to analyse the relationships between gender and Psychological and Subjective wellbeing indicators.

The analysis was done in several steps<sup>19</sup>. Firstly, descriptive analysis was carried out for all variables to understand the distribution of indicators by gender across different subgroups such as ethnicity, religion, sector, education, income, employment status, etc. The frequency of responses for each question was used to ensure the response structure was appropriate to analyse the gender differences within the indicators. Factor analysis of the multi-item questions was also used to determine whether the responses across domains are loading upon

<sup>16</sup>Based on per capita income - Sanjeewanie, K. I. H. et. al., 2012. *Missing dimensions of poverty among Samurdhi welfare recipients in Badulla district, Sri Lanka.*

<sup>17</sup>Based on per capita consumption - DCS, 2008. *Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2006/07.* Colombo: Department of Census and Statistics.

<sup>18</sup>For detailed discussion of suggested indicators, see Samman (2007).

<sup>19</sup>See Appendix 1: Steps followed in aggregating variables into indicators/variables/dimension - Psychological Wellbeing.

See Appendix 2 Steps followed in aggregating variables into indicators/variables/dimension - Subjective Wellbeing.

the same factors as the response structure would predict. Results of these have been used to develop composite indexes to understand the deprivation of the indicators used. The Correlation analysis was used to determine the different relationships between gender and the other variables, indicators and the dimension that purports to measure the same or similar concepts that relate to one another. Composite indices were developed in two levels. The first, composite index for the indicators of Psychological/Subjective wellbeing dimensions was developed using factor analysis, to measure gender-wise deprivation by different indicators. For this, the variables within the indicators were equally weighted<sup>20</sup>. The second composite index was developed to measure gender-wise deprivation of the Psychological/Subjective wellbeing dimension. Again the indicators within the dimension were equally weighted. The deprivation of variables, indicators and dimensions were measured according to the union approach<sup>21</sup>: deprived in any indicator considered as deprived in dimension, to understand the intensity of deprivation.

Finally a logistic regression analysis was carried out, to understand how the deprivation of indicators within the dimension contributes to change or impact on some other indicators within the dimension such as happiness, life satisfaction and gender.

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<sup>20</sup>A type of weighting that gives the same weight, or importance, to each of the variable within an indicator. This allows all of the response variables to be considered on an equally important to all the respondents.

<sup>21</sup>Alkire, S. & Foster, J., 2008. *Counting and Multi-dimensional Poverty Measurement*, OPHI Working Paper No. 7., Oxford: University of Oxford.





## 4. Results



This section focuses on how males and females experience Mental wellbeing according to the measures of Subjective and Psychological wellbeing suggested by Samman (2007).

### 4.1 Subjective wellbeing: Happiness and Life satisfaction

Subjective wellbeing has been analysed as two indicators: Life Satisfaction and Happiness. The predominance of positive affects over negative affects<sup>22</sup> has been described as Happiness (Bradburn, 1969), and has been explained as being responsive to short term circumstances (Samman, 2007). Survey data from Badulla shows high levels of overall happiness reported across both genders; around 90% are very happy or fairly happy. However, although it is statistically insignificant, there are more females (12.4%) compared to males (7%), among those who reported themselves as not very happy and not at all happy<sup>23</sup>. The findings show that this unhappiness is linked with socio-economic characteristics such as income, employment status and children. Females think that if they had a chance to be employed, they could get involved in contributing to family income, and increase the quality of their lives. Furthermore, those females who are employed and with better socio-economic wellbeing, have better educated children and are happier with the changes in their life over time.

*I am happy now. I went through a lot of hard times to bring my children up to this level. They still have to complete their education. If they studied well, I can be happy. Also we have to complete the construction of this house. I have done my part, so I'm happy.*

*- Female, 40 years*

In addition to this, the negative effects of lower socio-economic status seem to appear as a result of social comparison processes, in which poorer individuals, irrespective of the gender, compared themselves unfavorably with others and felt unable to gain resources that could adjust perceived inequalities.

<sup>22</sup> Positive and negative affects - pleasurable and unpleasurable emotions and moods.

<sup>23</sup> See Appendix 4: Deprivation by Indicators, variables – Subjective wellbeing.

කුඹුරු වැඩ කරද්දී සමහර වෙලාවට හිතෙනව ඇයි අපි දුප්පත් වෙලා ඉපදුණේ කියලා. ගමේ සමහර අයගෙ මට්ටමට වඩා අපි පහළින් ඉන්න කොට අපි හිතරම එයාලගේ උසුලු විසුලු වලට ලක් වෙනවනේ. අපි වගේම දුප්පත් අය අතරේ අපිට අසාධාරණයක් වෙන්නේ නැහැ. අපිට වඩා ලොකු අය අතරේ ඉන්නකොට තමයි අපිට අසාධාරණ විදිහට සලකන්නේ.

*While we are working in the field, sometimes we wonder why we were born poor. Because we are at a lower level than some people they look down on us and make fun of us. There is no injustice when we are among people who are poor like us. But we feel the injustice when we are with people who are higher than us.*

- Male, 42 years

The second indicator of Subjective wellbeing is Life satisfaction. This indicator factors two variables<sup>24</sup> namely Overall Life Satisfaction and Domain Specific Life Satisfaction<sup>25</sup>, which Cummins (1969) argues as commonly relevant for Life Satisfaction. According to Cummins these domains give unique variance to overall life satisfaction. But these unique contributions do not imply as to what extent people think these domains are relevant/important for overall life satisfaction. He further argued that, making judgments based on their levels of satisfaction could ignore the relevance/importance of such domains. For example, in the same levels of satisfaction, people might highly value some domains over others. In this analysis domains have been equally weighted assuming all the domains are equally important.

The findings show high levels of overall life satisfaction across both genders. Over 90% are satisfied with the domains such as: food, local security, family, dignity, ability to help others and religion. Interestingly, compared to males, there are more females who are not satisfied with their ability to exercise free choice. The qualitative data explains the link between the ability of females to exercise free choice and some other domains of life such as income, work, and education. The qualitative data implies that lack of economic independence, low education and unemployment has discouraged the ability of females to make choices to a certain extent. However, another interesting fact is that the traditional male dominance within households has been accepted by these females. In the qualitative data, females have mentioned that in most instances, they allow the males to make decisions related to daily situations and they support the decisions made by males as a mark of respect.

මහත්තයා තමයි ගොඩක් දේවල් තීරණය කරන්නේ, ඒක මට සතුටක්

*Husband decides most of the things, I'm happy with that*

- Female, 42 years

The study revealed two significant findings in relation to domain specific life satisfaction. One is that males, in comparison to females, were less satisfied with having friends. This may explain the anti social nature of males as adults (Myers, 1992), and interestingly this was also a finding in the Psychological wellbeing section, where males were less likely to get along well with people they come in to contact with. The second finding was that, females seem to be

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix 2: Steps followed in aggregating variables into indicators/variables/dimension subjective wellbeing.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 5: Cummin's seven domains in Life satisfaction.

less satisfied about their health conditions. These health issues are sometimes directly related to them, but they also worry about the health conditions of others in their families, and this affects their life satisfaction. This further illustrates the traditional care giving nature of females.

*My husband is a heart patient. Earlier he used to work as a daily-wage labourer. But for the past 7-8 months, he can't work because of this chest pain. If the treatment isn't taken he gets the pain. So he has to take medicines from Diyathalawa hospital, continuously. Both of us are not earning now, and have to live with children's money.*

*- Female, 52 years*

In an overview, 'overall life satisfaction' and the 'domain specific life satisfaction' are categorised into a composite as Life Satisfaction, using the factor analysis. There is no significant gender difference for the Life Satisfaction composite in the deprived sample, but there is a significant positive link with Happiness. The odds of being deprived in Happiness are four times higher among those who are deprived in Life Satisfaction<sup>26</sup>. However, Subjective wellbeing was analysed as a composite measure of happiness and life satisfaction, there is no difference between males and females on how they experience this subjective status of wellbeing<sup>27</sup>.

#### **4.2 Psychological wellbeing: Meaning in Life and Self Determination**

In this study, Psychological wellbeing is measured based on two eudaimonic approaches: Meaning in Life<sup>28</sup> and the Self Determination Theory<sup>29</sup>. It explores, to what extent meaning in life and three basic determinants of optimal functioning<sup>30</sup>, contribute to an individual's Psychological wellbeing.

The data from Badulla suggests that there is a significant difference in the way males and females experience meaning in life<sup>31</sup>. The study finds that a majority (75%) of the respondents have an understanding of what their meaning in life is. Among the deprived (25% of the population), there are more males (33%) who are deprived than females (19%). Interestingly, there is a greater intensity of male deprivation in all three indicators: having clear meaning or purpose in life, having satisfactory meaning in life and having a clear sense of what gives meaning to life. Males have expressed this deprivation as an effect of the pressure of being the bread winner of the household under difficult circumstances and the responsibilities which have affected them due to the nature of their job.

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 4: Deprivation by Indicators, variables – Subjective wellbeing.

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 4: Deprivation by Indicators, variables – Subjective wellbeing.

<sup>27</sup> Samman, E., 2007. *Psychological and Subjective Wellbeing: A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators*, Oxford: University of Oxford.

<sup>28</sup> Ability to strive towards excellence in fulfilling the idea of meaning in life: Self Determination Theory - Ryan and Deci 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Includes clear meaning and purpose in life, satisfactory meaning, and clear sense of what gives meaning to life.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 3: Deprivation by Indicators, variables – Psychological wellbeing.

මම රස්සාවක් කරන එක මගේ පවුලට වැදගත්. අපි ගොවිතැන් කටයුතු කරන්නේ පරම්පරාවෙන්. අත්දැකීමෙන් තමයි ගොවිතැන් කරන්නේ. අපේ මහන්සිය තිබුනට සමහර වෙලාවට පොළවත් එක්ක හැප්පෙන්න අමාරයි.

*My job is important for my family. From generations we are engaged in paddy cultivation. We do this from our own experience. Though we are encouraged in work it is hard to battle the earth.*

- Male, 43 years

Further, more females have stated that, to some extent, they have a clear sense of what gives meaning to life, compared to males. This sense of meaning also appears to contribute to Subjective wellbeing. They seem to be more satisfied about life when the children are well educated; they have a good job, good household income, better quality house, etc. This shows the interconnectedness of their thinking regarding life satisfaction and Subjective wellbeing. This illustrates that these domains of life which they are satisfied with, have given them a clear sense of what gives meaning to their life.

*I am little bit worried that I couldn't build a complete house, but I brought up my children well, and educated them well, now they have good lives in the society. That's my biggest achievement.*

- Female, 51 years

The deprivation of meaning in life can arise from different underlying motivations in different people and therefore have positive and negative effects on psychological health (Samman, 2007). The study showed a significant positive relationship between employment and Meaning in Life. However, between employed males and employed females, males (77%) are more deprived in the 'finding a satisfactory meaning in life' indicator. This was also reflected in the qualitative analysis as men appear more stressed about of their socially given responsibilities<sup>32</sup>, such as catering to household needs by doing a job. Therefore, they have found it difficult to achieve what they sense as factors that gives meaning to life; they do not seem to have a choice of enjoying work but feel compelled to do a job.

මෙවිචර කාලයක් තිසිසේ ජීවිතයට අරමුණක් හෙවිච. නාමත් හොයනව. අපි හැමදාම හිතන්නේ කවදාහරි මේ වලෙන් ගොඩ එන්න ඕනේ කියලායි. අපි හරියට අසරණ වෙනවා. අපේ ජීවිත ගැන අපිට ඕනේ විදිහට තීරණ ගන්න අපිට නිදහසක් නැහැ. උදේම ගෙදරින් ගියාම එන්නෙ හවසට, විවේක ගත්තොත් අපිට කන්න ලැබෙන්නෙ නැහැ.

*For this long I was looking for an objective for my life and I am still searching. Every day we are thinking of getting out of this pit somehow. We are devastated. We don't have the freedom to take decisions in our life. When we leave home in the morning for work we are only back by the evening. If we take rest, we will end up in hunger.*

- Male, 35 years

<sup>31</sup> Traditionally, men are supposed to earn a living to support their families. They are to be aggressive and in charge.

Females have a different understanding of meaning in life. There are more females who are not engaged in income earning activity. Moreover, females think that though they are more educated and competent, the socially prescribed traditional gender roles<sup>33</sup> of women have stopped them from being employed. It was expressed in the study that, given the nature of the cultural context in which they live, men always expect women to stay home and take care of their children and provide support for their livelihood activities, even though they may be more educated than the males. It was also reflected that this unemployment, in order to support the family, has caused them to lose their economic independence and power in decision making.

*My husband doesn't want me to do a job, because he wants me to stay home and look after our children, not only that, his parents also. But I did a job before the marriage, at that time I had enough money in my hand to use as my own, but now I have to depend on husband. If I could do a job, I can help him to share the household expense. But he says he can do that.*

*- Female, 40 years*

Many researchers have attempted to develop theories and define Meaning in Life. They have found that having more meaning has been positively related to life satisfaction and happiness (Steger, F.M., et al., 2006). The binary logistic regression analysis confirms that there is a significant contribution to happiness and life satisfaction from Meaning in Life<sup>34</sup>. Men and women who are deprived in Meaning in Life, are three times more likely to be deprived in happiness and five times more likely to be deprived in overall life satisfaction, whereas males are twice as likely to be deprived. This illustrates the link between subjective aspects of wellbeing and the meaning in life.

The next approach that is used is the Self-Determination Theory. This theory was developed by Ryan and Deci, which postulates the existence of three inherent fundamental needs, which influence the ability to achieve meaning in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). These three basic psychological fundamentals are: Autonomy - the need to choose what one is doing, being an agent of one's own life; Competence - the need to feel confident in doing what one is doing, and Relatedness - the need to have human connections that are close and secure, whilst still respecting autonomy and facilitating competence. The Self-Determination Theory emphasises that when these needs are satisfied, motivation and wellbeing are enhanced, but when they are limited, there is a negative impact on our lives.

Overall, there was low deprivation of self determination among respondents. Considering the deprivation among males and females, there is no significant difference, except in the Relatedness indicator. The study significantly shows that there are more males (25%) who are deprived compared to females (12%). It further explains that compared to females, males are less likely to get along with people they come into contact with and are close to the people they regularly interact with. This has been further expressed in domain specific life satisfaction, as males are less likely to be satisfied with friends. This may explain their preference of formal associations, whereas females are more likely to have emotional relationships.

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<sup>33</sup>Women belong at home cooking, cleaning, and caring for children. They are to be submissive and weak. Gender stereotypes such as these pervade society today.

<sup>34</sup>See Appendix 3: Deprivation by Indicators, variables – Psychological wellbeing.

*Usually, I take some time to understand any one. I never keep close contacts with them when we have just met.*

*- Male, 41 years*

In relation to Autonomy, both male and female samples had over 80% autonomy in their lives. Among the deprived, around 10% of both genders said they are not free to decide how to lead their own life, and significantly, compared to males, females are less positive about freedom to express ideas and opinions. This was also shown in domain specific life satisfaction, as females are less satisfied about their ability to exercise free choice and control over their lives. The qualitative data revealed that this is linked to female unemployment. According to the findings, within the socially expected caregiver role of a female, they are more economically dependent on the male breadwinners. The study shows females support the ideas of the main income earner, and don't suggest alternatives which may increase pressure on the main income earner.

The Competence of males and females are even higher (90%), males are less likely to feel they are capable and feel a sense of accomplishment, whereas females are less likely to say that others admit they are capable, but they feel that they are very capable. The qualitative data shows that, again, this has a link to the employment status of the respondents. Due to social and family pressures, more men tend to be engaged in paid jobs, even if they are not competent enough to do that job, whereas as many as 73% of females are unemployed. Also, people in Badulla district are engaged in agricultural livelihood activities, 45% of males in the sample were farmers or wage workers in agriculture. The geographical difficulties such as drought, mountainous terrain etc. have acted as discouraging factors in livelihood activities, which may have contributed to feelings of powerlessness and incapability.

The analysis explores these three psychological needs together, in understanding Self-Determination as a composite. Though it is statistically insignificant, around 30% of the total population is deprived in Self Determination. But interestingly, the deprivation in Self Determination has a significant contribution to the deprivation of overall Life Satisfaction. The odds of being deprived in overall Life Satisfaction are four times higher in those who are deprived in Self Determination than those who are not deprived in Self Determination<sup>35</sup>.

Further, Psychological wellbeing was also analysed as a composite measure of Meaning in Life and Self-Determination using the factor analysis. In summary, there is less deprivation (40%) among respondents in relation to Psychological wellbeing; but among them, there is a significantly higher deprivation among males (49%) than females (35%). It further finds that deprivation of Psychological wellbeing is also associated with the deprivation of Happiness and overall Life Satisfaction, irrespective of the gender.

Finally, the analysis shows that composite measures of Subjective and Psychological wellbeing, factor together to analyse Mental wellbeing as a composite. Interestingly, this composite measure has shown that 97% of the total population is not deprived in Mental wellbeing.

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<sup>35</sup> See Appendix 3: Deprivation by Indicators, variables – Psychological wellbeing.



## 5. Discussion and implications

Gender inequalities in mental wellbeing have been subject to many critiques<sup>36</sup> particularly on the aspect of Happiness. Exploring subjective and psychological perceptions of wellbeing provide insights about what people value, and to what extent they value material and non material aspects of life, which can help to design development programmes and policies to improve wellbeing. This paper endeavours to provide evidence from an empirical analysis to support existing and evolving programmes targeted at increasing levels of wellbeing.



The analysis in this paper shows that the majority of the population in the Badulla district is not deprived in Mental wellbeing. However, deeper analysis of Subjective and Psychological wellbeing indicators show that there are significant levels of deprivation within the indicators, as well as differences between males and females. This suggests the importance of looking at these aspects as individual variables, rather than as composite measures. Composite measures are constructed combining different variables and indicators. When constructing a composite index, the cut offs/thresholds used, lead to summarised data which can cause some data loss, which affects the final result. Therefore, the final composite may show slight differences compared to an in-depth analysis of the individual indicators within the final composite. Therefore, it is important to look at the findings on both micro and macro levels.

In this study, there were significant gender differences in some Subjective and Psychological wellbeing indicators. One such difference was that females are more deprived in Subjective wellbeing indicators and variables. Female unhappiness is linked with socio-economic characteristics, such as income, education and children, while male unhappiness is significantly linked to employment.

This points to the traditional gender role expectations of males and females. As per social norms, females are likely to have responsibilities of providing care to their families. This is seen to a great extent in Badulla, where the majority of females are unemployed, are the primary care givers, as well as providers of necessary support to the main income earner in the family.

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<sup>36</sup> See Samman (2007).



This female unemployment has manifested as deprivations in some indicators of Psychological wellbeing. Females tend to be more deprived in expressing their opinions and ideas, which they link to a lack of ability to exercise free choices on employment and a lack of economic independence. Even though they are more educated and feel they are more competent than males, as per the traditional social system and the expectations of the family members, they have to stay at home and care for others.

It was also very interesting to see that for females, meaning in life has a positive link with the satisfaction of specific domains in life. When the children are well educated; they have a good job, a good household income, better quality house, etc. they feel that they have a clear sense of what gives meaning to life. Though they have to stay home and look after children and the family, they accept that role and have a sense that that is their meaning in life. This may also lead to an opportunity cost for the women who are employed, because staying home, caring for the children and assisting in the husband's work may result in more gain than the monetary gain from being in employment.

This study draws attention to the relationship between unemployment and what gives meaning to female life, within the context of the patriarchal household structure in the Badulla district. Thus, programmes targeting increased wellbeing should consider creating home-based employment opportunities for women, that give them the flexibility to be caregivers, provide a supplementary source of income to the household and be economically independent.

Men report greater deprivation of Psychological wellbeing indicators such as what gives Meaning in life and Relatedness.

The study shows that men are less likely to have clear meaning or purpose in life, having a satisfactory meaning in life and having a clear sense of what gives meaning to life, and this may be linked to the pressure of being the breadwinner of the family. The study shows that, though men take on the traditional role to work and look after family needs, they do not always seem to enjoy it. Men appear to work harder at more strenuous labour but this may be specific to Badulla and similar areas where employment opportunities are limited and men are mainly involved in hard labor in agricultural livelihoods.

The study showed a significant deprivation for males in the perceptions of life satisfaction in social relationships<sup>37</sup>. Their role as the sole income provider for the family could have further isolated men, deprived their social relationships to a certain extent. According to the literature on Mental wellbeing, men are more likely to have formal associations with people in the society compared to women. However, females tend to have emotionally intimate relationships, which help them to receive more social support from co-workers, relatives, friends, and adult children.

However, this sample was inadequate to conduct further analysis on how employment and social relationships of males affect their Psychological wellbeing and Mental wellbeing, and highlights the need for larger qualitative analyses to assess these deprivations.

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<sup>37</sup> The sum of the social interactions between people over time. This can be a positive or a negative relationship.

## 6. Conclusion

This study explores the complexity of gendered differences in experiencing Mental wellbeing in the Badulla district of Sri Lanka. The findings of this study shows that over 97% of the total population in Badulla is not deprived in Mental wellbeing. However, levels of Mental wellbeing differed between males and females. The study also highlighted the effects of socialisation on the way in which men and women experience Mental wellbeing. The findings revealed that the female respondents wanted more economic power in addition to their traditional role as caregivers, but did not indicate a desire for change in the patriarchal structure of the household.



The study also explores the relationship between Subjective wellbeing and Psychological wellbeing in order to assess Mental wellbeing as stated in the literature. It shows that the variables and indicators within these two dimensions are interconnected and sometimes they complement one another. However, in this study, as an overall, there is a significant positive relationship between Meaning in life, Happiness and Overall life satisfaction. If people are satisfied with their life overall, then they seem to be happy and have a meaning in life. It further explains that experiencing satisfaction in specific domains in life would lead people to be happier, and people perceived achieving that satisfaction as having meaning in life.

This further illustrates how people's life satisfaction depends on their different perspectives of aspects of life, such as home, work etc. which ultimately affects their Psychological wellbeing.

These different perspectives come through their attitudes towards life. The different attitudes to life lead them on to look at circumstances in life in different ways, and react to them accordingly, which leads to changes in their lives over time. Hence, it is important to empower people to develop soft skills that change their attitudes towards circumstances in life in order to achieve wellbeing.

This study highlighted that even if some Subjective wellbeing indicators contributed to the deprivation of females, such as the ability to exercise free choices, that very same variable was valued by females in the context of the Badulla district as indicated in Psychological wellbeing as Meaning in life. Hence, when designing programmes and policies, to address certain deprivations, it is important to be aware of how they will impact the value systems within different contexts. It is also important to look at the process of how they socialise within different contexts, as individual choices often depend on the effects of socialisation.

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## Appendix 1: Steps followed in aggregating variables into indicators/variables/dimension – psychological wellbeing

Indicators	Variables	Selection criteria for the deprivation of variable	Selection criteria for the deprivation of indicator	Selection criteria for the deprivation of dimension
Meaning in life	Life has no clear meaning or purpose	Using factor analysis, if answer is not at all true or somewhat true - deprived	Using factor analysis, if deprived in meaning clear or satisfactory meaning or meaning sense - deprived in meaning in life	
	Have not found a satisfactory meaning in life			
	Have no clear sense of what gives meaning to life			
Autonomy	Don't feel free to decide how to lead life	Using factor analysis, if answer is not at all true or somewhat true - deprived	Using factor analysis, if deprived in autonomy to lead life or autonomy to express ideas and opinions or autonomy to be honest with one self - deprived in autonomy	Using factor analysis, if deprived in meaning in life or self determination - deprived in psychological wellbeing
	Don't feel free to express ideas and opinions			
	Don't feel can be honest with oneself			
	Other people do not feel one is competent at one does			
	Do not feel a sense of Accomplishment			
	Do not generally feel capable			
Competence	Do not get along with people one meets	Using factor analysis, if answer is not at all true or somewhat true - deprived	Using factor analysis, if deprived in autonomy or competence or relatedness - deprived in self determination	
	Do not feel close to the people one interacts regularly with			
	Do not feel that people in life care about one			
Relatedness	Do not get along with people one meets	Using factor analysis, if answer is not at all true or somewhat true - deprived	Using factor analysis, if deprived in relatedness get along or relatedness close or relatedness care - deprived in relatedness	
	Do not feel close to the people one interacts regularly with			
	Do not feel that people in life care about one			

## Appendix 2: Steps followed in aggregating variables into indicators/variables/dimension – Subjective wellbeing

Indicators	Variables	Selection criteria for the deprivation of variable	Selection criteria for the deprivation of indicator	Selection criteria for the deprivation of dimension
Happiness	Overall life satisfaction	Using factor analysis, if answer is not very satisfied or not at all satisfied - deprived		
	Life satisfaction	Using factor analysis, if answer is not very happy or not at all happy - deprived		
Life satisfaction	Domain specific life satisfaction	Using factor analysis, if answer is not very happy or not at all happy - deprived	Education	Using factor analysis, if deprived in life satisfaction or happiness - deprived in subjective wellbeing
	Education		Using factor analysis, if deprived in education or housing or income or work - deprived in basic needs	
	Housing		Using factor analysis, if deprived in health or friends or family or neighbors - deprived in social networks + health	
	Income			
	Work		Using factor analysis, if deprived in food or free choice and control over your life or dignity or ability to help others or Spiritual/religious or philosophical beliefs - deprived in emotional wellbeing +food	
	Health			
	Friends		Using factor analysis, if deprived in local security - deprived in local security	
	Family			
	Neighborhood			
	Food			
	Free choice and control over your life			
	Dignity			
	Ability to help others			
Spiritual/religious or philosophical beliefs				
Local Security				



## Appendix 3: Deprivation by Indicators, variables – Psychological wellbeing

**Table 1: Deprivation by Indicators**

Indicators	Deprivation	Male	Female	Sig.	ODD ratio/ likelihood ratio
Meaning in life	Not deprived	67.5%	81.2%	0.020*	2.0747
	Deprived	32.5%	18.8%		
Autonomy	Not deprived	82.8%	84.5%	No statistically significant difference	
	Deprived	17.2%	15.5%		
Competence	Not deprived	88.6%	89.8%	No statistically significant difference	
	Deprived	11.4%	10.2%		
Relatedness	Not deprived	74.9%	87.7%	0.016*	0.420
	Deprived	25.1%	12.3%		
Self Determination	Not deprived	72.5%	65.3%	No statistically significant difference	
	Deprived	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>		
Psychological wellbeing	Not deprived	64.9%	51.1%	0.039*	0.506
	Deprived	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>35.1%</b>		

\* Odd ratio is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 2: Deprivation by Variables**

Indicators	Variables	Male	Female	Sig.	ODD ratio/ likelihood ratio	
Meaning in life	Life has no clear meaning or purpose	21.7%	9.3%	.012*	.369	
	Have not found a satisfactory meaning in life	24.5%	10.6%	.007*	.368	
	Have no clear sense of what gives meaning to life	20.4%	8.6%	.014*	.368	
	Composite	32.5%	18.8%	.022**	2.075	
Self determination	Autonomy	Don't feel free to decide how to lead life	9.5%	10.6%	No statistically significant difference	
		Don't feel free to express ideas and opinions	6.0%	11.1%		
		Don't feel can be honest with oneself	6.6%	13.4%		
		Composite	17.2%	15.5%		
	Competence	Other people do not feel one is competent at one does	7.6%	4.4%	No statistically significant difference	
		Do not feel a sense of accomplishment	7.8%	3.0%		
		Do not generally feel capable	4.7%	6.6%		
		Composite	11.4%	10.2%		
	Relatedness	Do not get along with people one meets	9.0%	4.2%	No statistically significant difference	
		Do not feel close to the people one interacts regularly with	12.3%	7.0%		
		Do not feel that people in life care about one	15.3%	7.5%		
		Composite	25.1%	12.3%		
Composite		34.7%	27.5%	No statistically significant difference		
Psychological wellbeing	Composite	48.9%	35.1%	.039*	1.767	

\* Odd ratio is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 3: Regression analysis output**

Decision variable	Significance of individual predictors										Likelihood ratio test		R2	
	Predictors	B	S.E. B	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Exp(B) odd ratio/likelihood ratio	Log likelihood	Cox & Snell	Nagelkerke				
<b>Meaning in life</b>														
Deprived Happiness (Yes = 1, No = 0)	Deprived-Meaning in life (Yes = 1, No = 0)	1.153	.453	6.481	1	.011*	3.167	140.534a	.028	.057				
	Constant	-2.570	.301	72.736	1	.000	.077							
Deprived Life Satisfaction (Yes = 1, No = 0)	Deprived-Meaning in life (Yes = 1, No = 0)	1.641	.493	11.068	1	.001*	5.159	120.003a	.049	.110				
	Constant	-2.999	.365	67.638	1	.000	.050							
Gender (Male = 1, Female = 0)	Deprived-Meaning in life (Yes = 1, No = 0)	.730	.315	5.377	1	.020*	2.075	301.295a	.024	.033				
	Constant	-.357	.157	5.144	1	.023	.700							
<b>Self Determination</b>														
Deprived Happiness (Yes = 1, No = 0)	Deprived-Self Determination (Yes = 1, No = 0)	.873	.448	3.800	1	.051	2.394	143.138a	.017	.034				
	Constant	-2.512	.306	67.590	1	.000	.081							
Deprived Life Satisfaction (Yes = 1, No = 0)	Deprived-Self Determination (Yes = 1, No = 0)	1.456	.485	9.019	1	.003*	4.288	126.167a	.041	.090				
	Constant	-2.951	.371	63.292	1	.000	.052							
Gender (Male = 1, Female = 0)	Deprived-Self Determination (Yes = 1, No = 0)	.335	.291	1.321	1	.250	1.397	306.054a	.006	.008				
	Constant	-.281	.163	2.980	1	.084	.755							
<b>Psychological wellbeing</b>														
Deprived Happiness (Yes = 1, No = 0)	Deprived-Psychological wellbeing (Yes = 1, No = 0)	1.245	.474	6.895	1	.009*	3.473	139.058a	.033	.069				
	Constant	-2.836	.384	54.591	1	.000	.059							
Deprived Life Satisfaction (Yes = 1, No = 0)	Deprived-Psychological wellbeing (Yes = 1, No = 0)	1.705	.562	9.211	1	.002*	5.504	119.797a	.049	.110				
	Constant	-3.347	.485	47.541	1	.000	.035							
Gender (Male = 1, Female = 0)	Deprived-Psychological wellbeing (Yes = 1, No = 0)	.569	.276	4.270	1	.039	1.767	301.628a	.019	.026				
	Constant	-.387	.179	4.673	1	.031	.679							

\* Significant at the 0.05 level



## Appendix 4: Deprivation by Indicators, variables – Subjective wellbeing

**Table 1: Deprivation by Indicators**

Indicators	Deprivation	Male	Female	Sig.	ODD ratio/ likelihood ratio
Happiness	Not deprived	93.00%	87.60%	No statistically significant difference	
	Deprived	7.00%	12.40%		
Life satisfaction - overall	Not deprived	90.10%	92.00%	No statistically significant difference	
	Deprived	9.90%	8.00%		
Life satisfaction - domains	Not deprived	44.10%	51.30%	No statistically significant difference	
	Deprived	48.07%	55.90%		
Life satisfaction - composite (overall+domain)	Not deprived	43.20%	50.30%	No statistically significant difference	
	Deprived	<b>56.80%</b>	<b>49.70%</b>		
Subjective wellbeing - composite	Not deprived	87.6%	91.9%	No statistically significant difference	
	Deprived	12.4%	8.1%		

\* Odd ratio is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 2 : Deprivation by Variables**

Indicators	Variables	Male	Female	Sig.	ODD ratio/ likelihood ratio	
Happiness		7.0%	12.4%	No statistically significant difference		
Life satisfaction	Overall life satisfaction	9.9%	8.0%	No statistically significant difference		
	Domain specific life satisfaction	Education	26.4%	31.9%	No statistically significant difference	
		Housing	20.2%	22.4%		
		Income	29.4%	35.5%		
		Work	9.9%	11.7%		
		Health	10.6%	23.1%	.016*	.395
		Friends	14.1%	5.0%	.023*	3.146
		Family	6.3%	5.6%	No statistically significant difference	
		Neighborhood	11.9%	8.5%		
		Food	7.2%	6.4%		
		Free choice and control over your life	4.4%	10.5%		
		Dignity	6.0%	7.5%		
		Ability to help others	7.2%	5.5%		
		Spiritual/religious or philosophical beliefs	.0%	1.9%		
		Local Security	7.4%	9.2%		
Composite	48.7%	55.9%				
Composite	49.7%	56.8%	No statistically significant difference			
Subjective wellbeing	Composite	8.1%	12.4%	No statistically significant difference		

\* Odd ratio is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 3: Regression analysis output**

Decision variable	Significance of individual predictors							Likelihood ratio test		R2	
	Predictors	B	S.E. B	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Exp(B) odd ratio/likelihood ratio	Log likelihood	Cox & Snell	Nagelkerke	
<b>Life satisfaction</b>											
Deprived Happiness (Yes = 1, No = 0)	Deprived-Life satisfaction (Yes = 1, No = 0)	1.554	.573	7.367	1	.007*	4.731	137.257a	.042	.086	
	Constant	-3.229	.514	39.388	1	.000	.040				
Gender (Male = 1, Female = 0)	Deprived-Life satisfaction (Yes = 1, No = 0)	-.288	.271	1.134	1	.287	.749	304.716a	.005	.007	
	Constant	-.047	.197	.058	1	.810	.954				
<b>Subjective wellbeing</b>											
Gender (Male = 1, Female = 0)	Deprived-Subjective wellbeing (Yes = 1, No = 0)	-.473	.451	1.097	1	.295	.623	314.203a	.005	.007	
	Constant	-.145	.140	1.073	1	.300	.865				

\* Significant at the 0.05 level

**Appendix 5: Cummin's 7 domains of life satisfaction**

Domain	Items of interest
Material wellbeing	food/housing/income
Health	health
Productivity	work
Security	physical safety
Intimacy	friends and family
Community	neighborhood/education - ability to actively helping other
Emotional wellbeing	wellbeing from spiritual religious or philosophical beliefs





There is a growing awareness that the concept of wellbeing should not be understood exclusively as Material wellbeing since non-material wellbeing (Mental wellbeing) is the end result of achieving material wellbeing. As such, happiness and wellbeing are often considered the end goals of development. Research has shown that income and happiness are not linked above very low levels of income, and as a result, there has been a growing interest among researchers and policymakers in the non-material dimensions of wellbeing and its direct measurement. Therefore, Mental wellbeing is increasingly being considered an important dimension in the multidimensional phenomenon of poverty.

Multidimensional poverty analyses identify a number of relevant indicators which have evolved over time from economic indicators to social and psychological indicators of poverty such as Mental wellbeing. However, there is still a lack of internationally comparable data at individual/household level to understand the complex nature of deprivation.

A module, developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) using subjective indicators as well as psychological or mental health indicators, was piloted by CEPA in the Badulla District of Sri Lanka. The module yielded a rich dataset that measures and understands this dimension of wellbeing in the Sri Lankan context. This paper draws on that data to explore the relationship between wellbeing and gender, and reveals interesting differences between the way men and women experience Mental wellbeing.

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