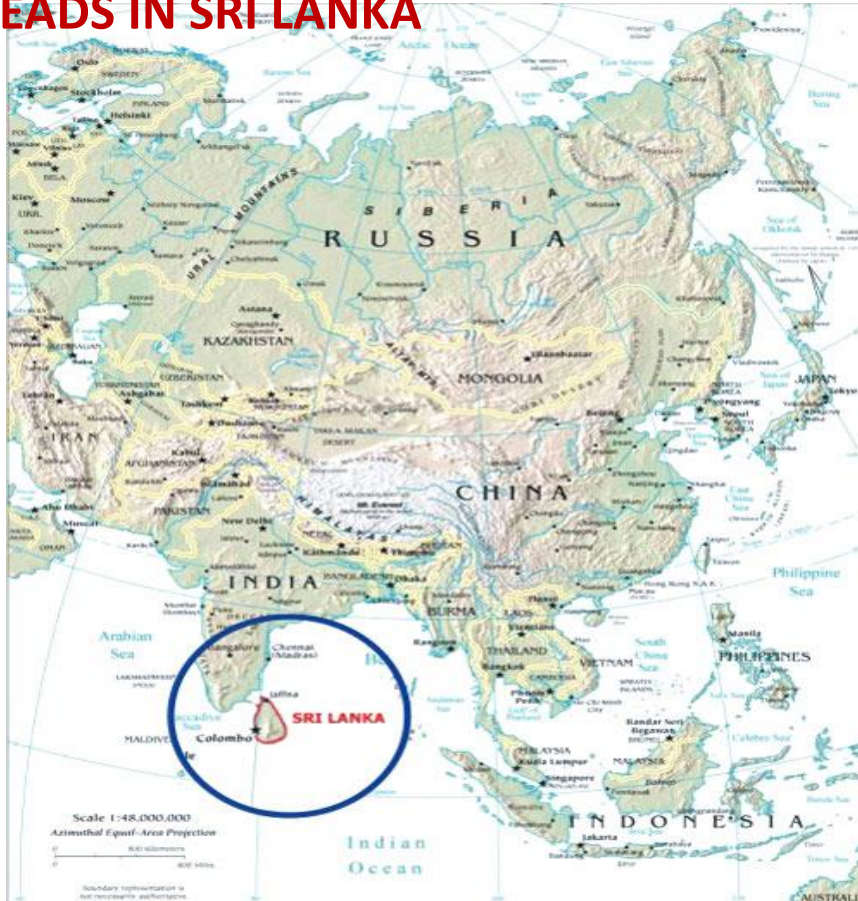


FROM SOCIAL CAPITAL TO SOCIAL MOBILITY: LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF 'SOCIAL SUPPORT' AND 'SOCIAL LEVERAGE' NETWORKS AMONG POOR FEMALE HOUSEHOLD HEADS IN SRI LANKA



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INTRODUCTION

- **Social Capital (SC) refers to personal connections & interpersonal interactions- social networks**
- **Non monetary resource/accessible to all**
- **Major or only asset possessed by the poor**
- **Powerful term to analyse and alleviate poverty**
- **Major focus on increasing SC that poor possess**

RATIONALE & RESEARCH QUESTION

Social Capital is not a unitary concept

Different forms / Different uses



- **What type of SC does the poor have ?**
- **Can one type of SC substitute for another ?**

Brigg's (1998) distinction of SC

Social Support

- Kin/Neighbours/friends
- Homogeneous nature
- Strong ties
- Cope with everyday demands

Food/childcare/emotional support/small loans



Helps to **'GET BY'**

Social Leverage

- People unlike self
- Dispersed & heterogeneous
- Weak ties
- Upward mobility

Education/training/new information



Helps **'GET AHEAD'**

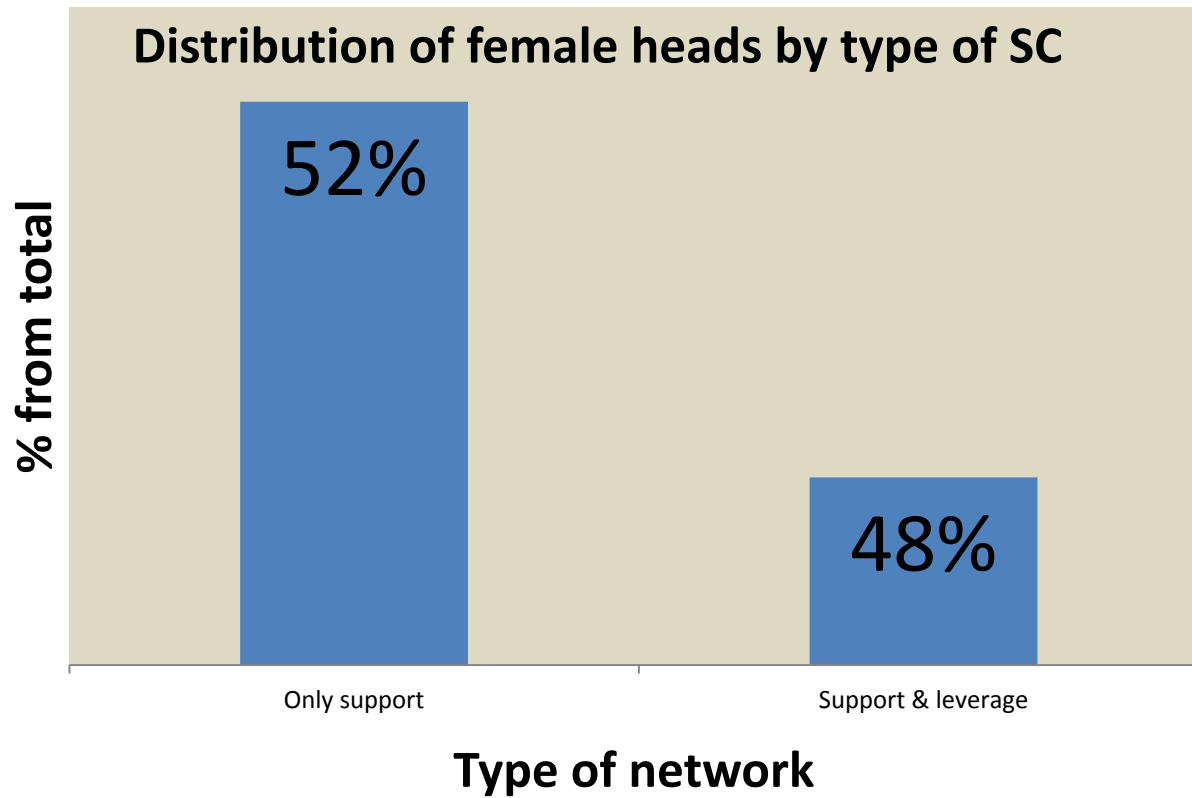
OBJECTIVE

Analyse social networks of female heads of HH

DATA

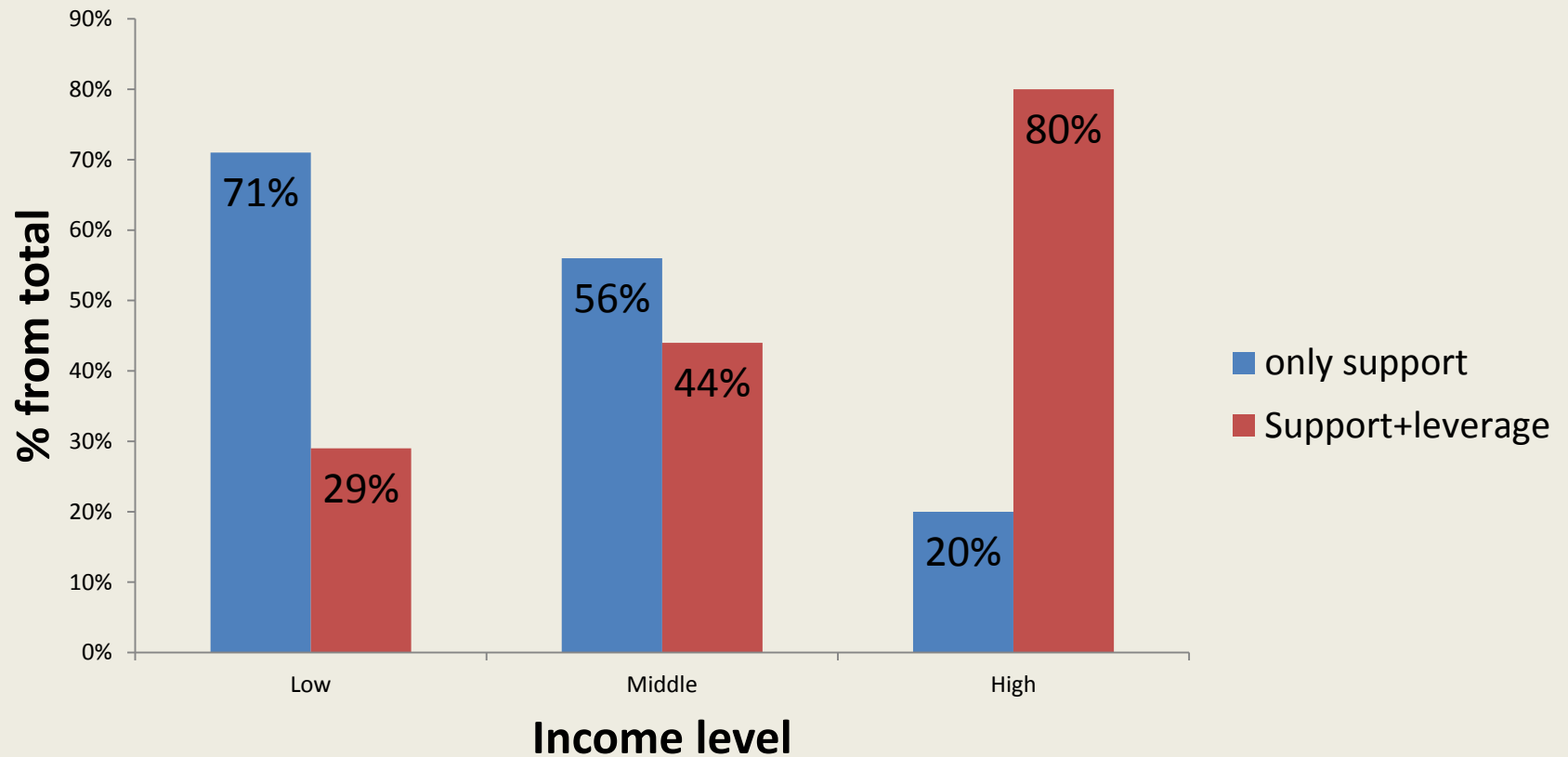
**Quantitative and Qualitative data
from female heads of households
in three districts of Sri Lanka**

RESULTS



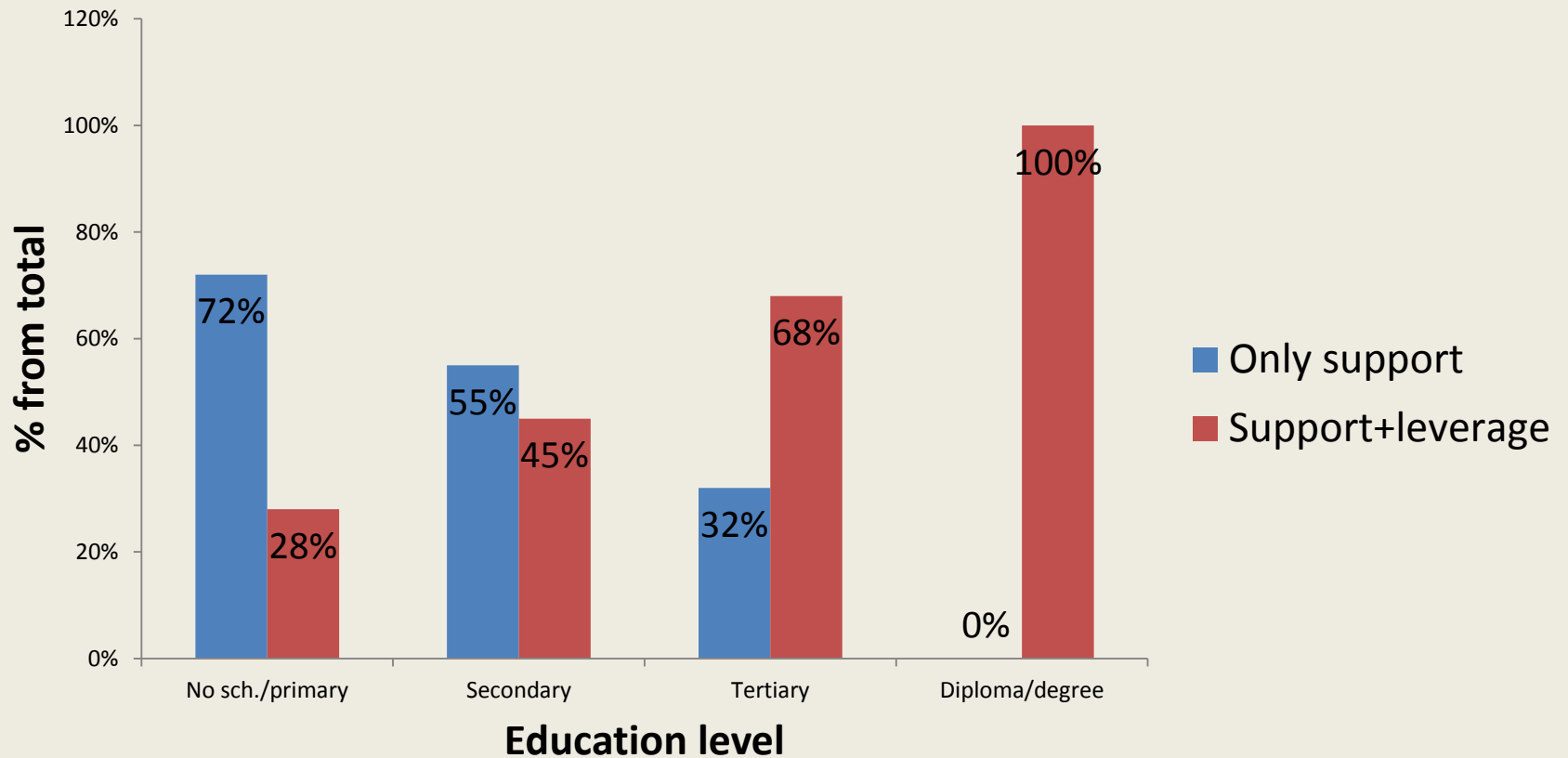
RESULTS *cont.*

Social capital by income level



RESULTS *cont.*

Social capital by education



RESULTS *cont.*

Low income women with only social support

“...people in the neighbourhood are extremely helpful...not that they have...they are also poor...but they try to give the kids something to eat when there is no food at home”

(Estate sector/married - spouse paralysed/3 dependent children)

“When I became homeless...village youth built this hut for us... it is state land...we are encroachers...this is not a house...but we have a place to sleep...they did what they can”

(Rural sector/widowed/2 dependent children)

“When husband becomes a devil ...neighbours hide us ...because she knows that she got me married to a mad man, mother-in-law feeds the children...but I want him behind bars ...or take him to the ‘mad house’ (hospital for the mentally sick) in Colombo...and go to Middle East...mother in law thinks ‘children are fed what else do you want’”

(Urban/married to mentally sick man/3 dependent children)

RESULTS *cont.*

Women showing upward socio economic mobility

“ Madam was good to me...she **taught me to make cakes and sew...she didn't allow me to buy unnecessary things...advised me to collect money and buy sewing machines...when I returned from Middle East...I brought three sewing machines...and started my business here...**”

(Started as domestic helper in the Middle East /now high income business woman)

Because I didn't lie and steal, ladies & gentlemen in the houses I worked liked me. One of them **got me a permanent job** as office cleaner...my bosses **arranged a housing loan** to be deducted little by little from the salary...because I had a **stable salary I educated my daughter...they send the salary to the bank, so my husband can't take it...**”

(Lived in a shanty/started as domestic helper / now in stable employment/daughter in clerical post/owns a small house/middle income family)

CONCLUSIONS

- **Poor are more likely to have only social support**
- **Source of strength for subsistence needs**
- **Lacks quality/and permanent solutions because networks them selves are poor**



Poverty alleviations should focus more on quality and diversity of SC than quantity

Thank you!

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