

KHICHURI INDEX

Understanding The Meal Affordability of Low-Income People in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND

- The Khichuri Index compares daily wages with the cost of a basic khichuri meal, providing a simple and intuitive measure of diet affordability across Bangladesh.
- Global evidence shows that reduced purchasing power and disproportionately affect women, children, and low-income households, worsening nutrition and well-being. .

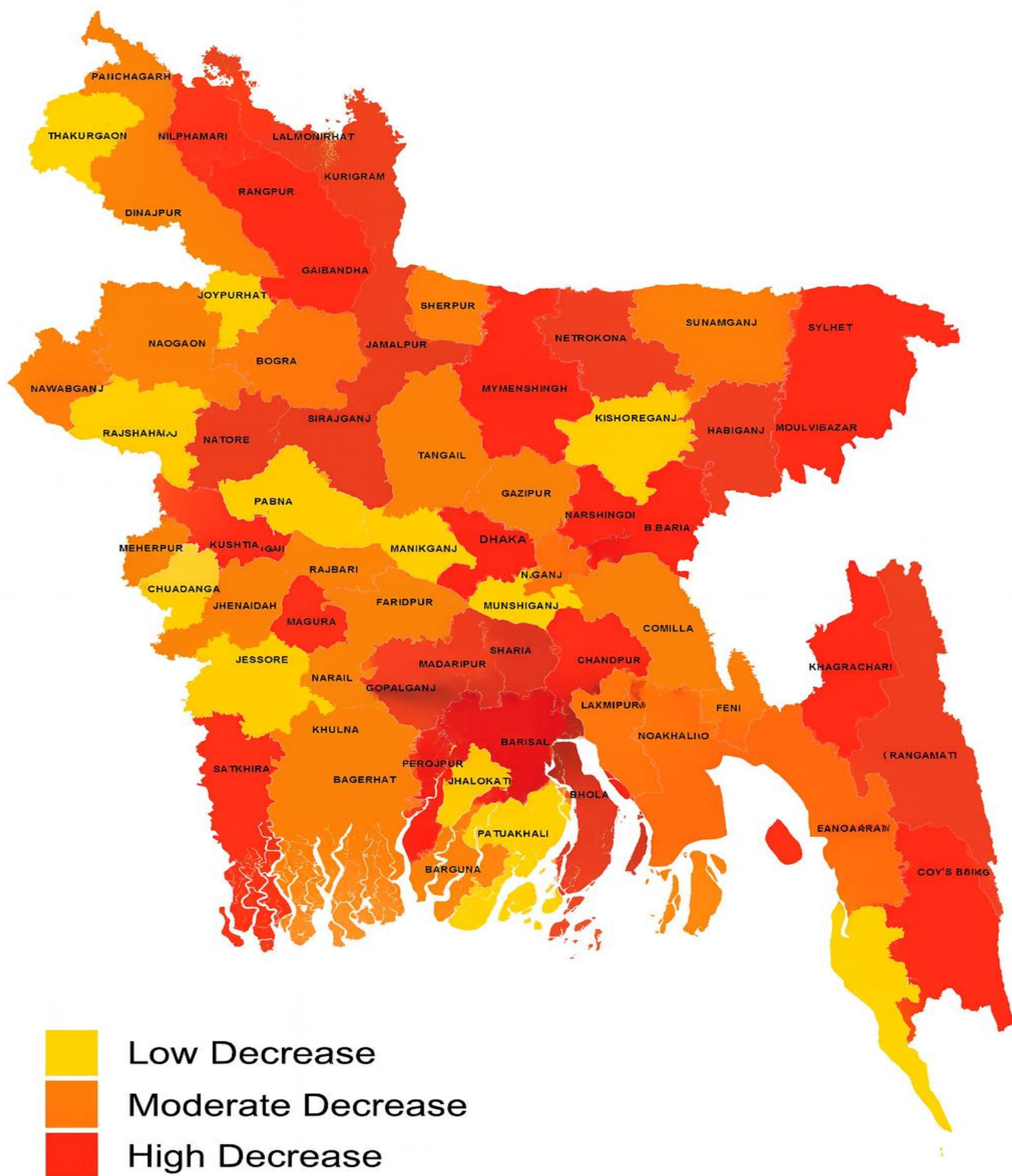
METHODS

- Meal affordability was measured using a standard khichuri portion (rice, lentil, oil, onion, salt, chilli) aligned with 2,516 kcal/day dietary needs.
- The Khichuri Index compares daily wages to the cost of one khichuri meal: $\text{Index} = \text{Daily Wage} / \text{Cost of Khichuri}$.
- Wages were assessed for agricultural (male/female), manufacturing (male/female), and rickshaw-puller workers, with adjustments for meal payments and rickshaw rent.

RESULTS

- **Nationwide decline:** All districts experienced continuous reductions in khichuri affordability from 2021–2024, with a sharp rise in high- and moderate-decrease districts in 2024.
- **Labour groups hit hardest:** Female agricultural and manufacturing workers, rickshaw pullers, and male manufacturing workers show the steepest and most widespread affordability declines.
- **Regional patterns:** Haor shows the sharpest decline due to climate vulnerability; Southern and CHT regions remain volatile; Barind, Middle, and Northern regions show steady, chronic affordability stress.
- **Ripple effect:** The closure of sugar mills in the Northern belt created labour surplus and wage suppression, spreading affordability declines from early-affected districts (Dinajpur, Joypurhat) to surrounding areas such as Gaibandha, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, and Natore.

TABLE/FIGURE/IMAGE



CONCLUSION

- Wage stagnation, inflation, and climate shocks continue to strain rural and marginalized districts such as Netrokona, Gaibandha, and Dinajpur, making even basic meals like khichuri increasingly unaffordable.
- The data calls for swift, multi-pronged policy action, including sector-specific wage adjustments, stronger wage–price monitoring, and gender-sensitive measures to address the unique challenges faced by women in the workforce.
- The success of the Khichuri Index—now institutionalized through a national tool BRAC–BIDS Khichuri Index —further underscores how evidence-based leadership can translate into meaningful national policy impact.

Acknowledgement: Consider including acknowledgments here.

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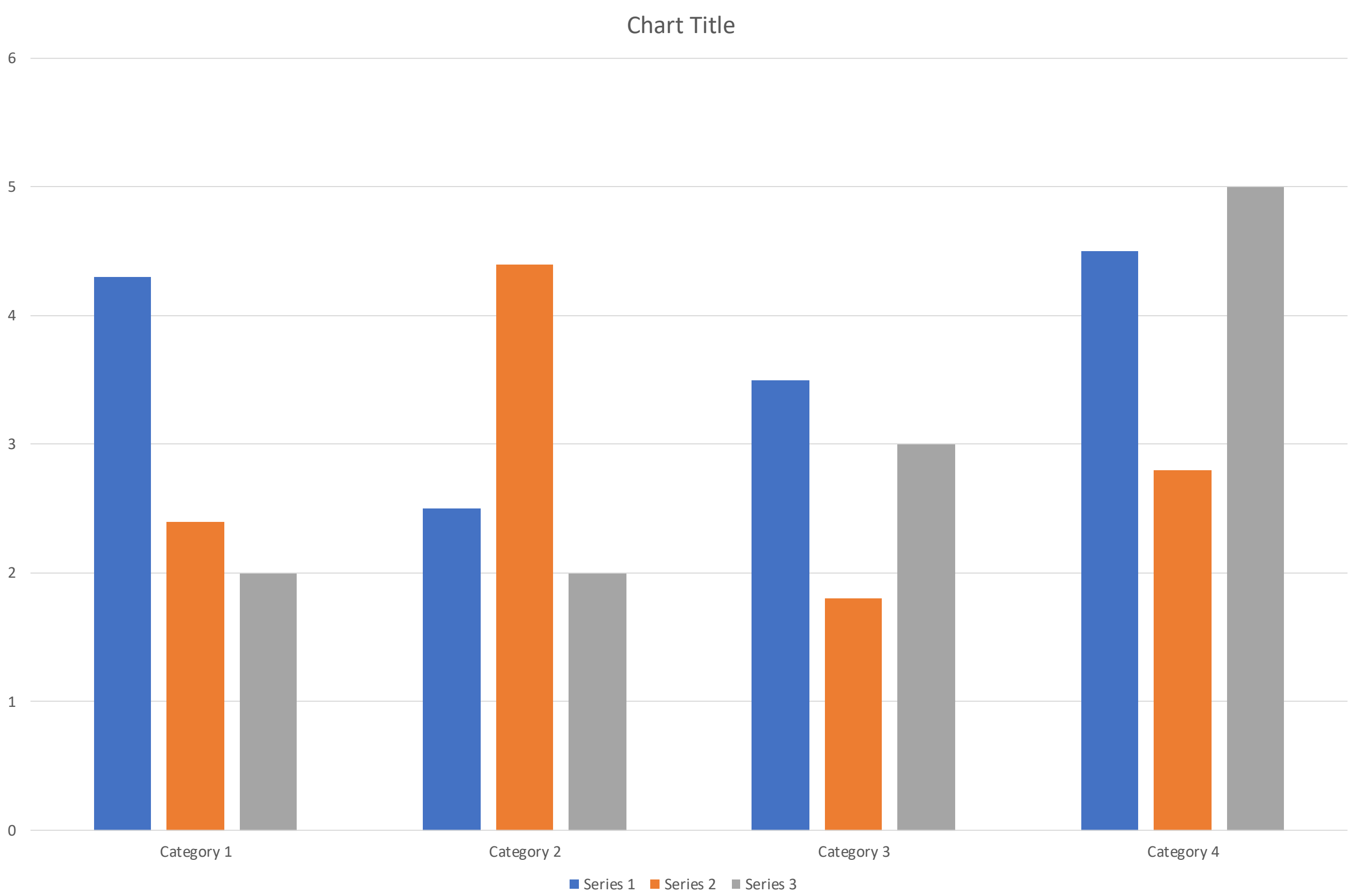
BACKGROUND

- Pellentesque pretium neque non arcu vestibulum venenatis.
- Donec molestie nisi sit amet nisl mollis, in pretium nisi volutpat.
- Nunc et nisi fermentum neque iaculis feugiat in vitae purus.
- Vestibulum placerat augue in nulla mollis scelerisque.



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