

UDK: 339.9(549.3)

Paper received: February 09, 2022

Paper accepted: February 17, 2022

Journal of Entrepreneurship
and Business Resilience
Year V • Vol 5, No 1.
pp. 75-82

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

POVERTY, FOOD SECURITY AND TO COVID-19 IN BANGLADESH

Md.Shajahan Kabir

*Department of Rural Sociology, Bangladesh Agricultural University,
Mymensingh, (BANGLADESH)
E-mails: mskabir786@gmail.com*

Sahed Hossen Sajib

*Department of Rural Sociology, Bangladesh Agricultural University,
Mymensingh (BANGLADESH)*

ABSTRACT

This paper observes the aspects of poverty and food security during COVID-19 in Bangladesh. When Covid-19 hit Bangladesh, the first reaction from the government was to shut down the economy to protect the people by asserting isolation and lockdown all over the country. This incident caused a great disaster for poverty and food security. Many parts of our society were affected by moderate to severe food insecurity. The lockdown slowed COVID-19's expansion, but it led to severe food and nutrition insecurity among the population. Later, poverty wreaks havoc as a result of the pandemic in this country. The poor become poorer and middle earners become poor due to this pandemic. In this context, it is necessary designing a resilience-building programme because resilient people have diverse, flexible and ecologically sustainable livelihood strategies.

Key words: Covid-19, Poverty, Food Security, Resilience

JEL classification: I1, I3, Q18

INTRODUCTION

The Covid epidemic has severely harmed the country's previous quick growth, and it is affecting people all around the world. It has caused at least 13 million more people in Bangladesh to slip into poverty. [22] COVID-19 was first detected in Bangladesh on March 8, 2020, and by April 14, 2021, there had been 697,985 confirmed cases and 9,891 fatalities. With substantial measures such as lockdown, closure of educational institutions, and a restriction on social/mass meetings, the country, like many others, was striving to reduce the danger of transmission and mortality. [16] Even though Bangladesh was hit by the pandemic later than the rest of the area, it had a significant economic impact during the outbreak. Previously to the pandemic, over 51 million individuals in Bangladesh (31.5 percent of the population) were either mildly or highly food vulnerable, according to 2019 projections by FAO. [12] Following the lockdown, 13 million people were instantly out of employment with no alternative [1], and an additional 16.4 million people (of which 12.7 million are from rural regions) are likely to be in extreme poverty as a result of COVID-19 in Bangladesh [20]. Overall, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has brought about unprecedented challenges to the food security situation, particularly with poverty in Bangladesh. The United Nations (UN) estimates that more than a quarter of a billion people could face starvation during the pandemic. [33]

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 epidemic has far-reaching implications, including financial, economic, and societal ramifications. Due to social distance, self-isolation, and travel restrictions, many jobs have been lost, resulting in a reduction in the workforce in all sectors of the economy. [29] After the lockdown, the amount of monthly spending is reported as being more than the amount of monthly revenue. As a result of the income-to-expenditure mismatch, households were forced to save less and sell goods at a lower price. During the lockdown, families faced a never-before-seen shortage of essential commodities in the market. People have also noticed a rise in grocery prices. As a result, households were forced to limit their food consumption. [8] This circumstance then set the path for food shortages. Household coping methods and government help were insufficient to sustain exact living standards during the crisis, resulting in acute food shortages and dire economic conditions. [11] All these events were liable for Bangladesh's severe food insecurity and poverty.

OBJECTIVES

The study aims to learn about the current condition of poverty and food security during Covid-19 and future challenges of the obstacles people of Bangladesh encounter and how they deal with them. The core objectives are:

1. To identify the conditions of poor and poverty from the context of Covid-19
2. To clearly depict the food security scenario during Covid-19 in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

This study relied on a descriptive synthesis of secondary data. Methodologies for quantitative and qualitative analysis were culled from a variety of sources. This article drew on relevant academic papers, reports, secondary data, author estimates, and press stories concerning the Covid-19's impact on poverty and food security. Science Direct, PubMed, Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, and other reputable sources were used to compile the review papers on the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from various sources have been used to augment other studies and research. Several sources were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data as well as personal assessments of social behaviour.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

POVERTY

The Covid-19 epidemic has led to an unprecedented surge in poverty in Bangladesh in a short time. The actual monthly payment has dropped dramatically. Unemployment and shortened pay, a lack of activity or small/medium company activity have all contributed to the steep decline in earnings. [11] There is no disputing that Bangladesh's decade-long record in poverty reduction is in jeopardy. The abrupt and unexpected growth in poverty in Bangladesh can be attributed to several factors. Since the start of Covid-19, the lockdown of economic disruption has inflicted unimaginable damage on the economy. This wreckage wreaked havoc on the labour market, with many individuals losing their employment or earning less as a result. Despite the lockdown being eventually lifted, economic activity has yet to resume. The distressing effects on export-oriented sectors, less remittance-receiving, and disruption of tourism exacerbated Bangladesh's poverty during the Corona pandemic. [23] COVID-19 is expected to increase global poverty and hunger in a variety of ways. It is suggested that the overburden on the health sector leads to resource reallocation to the health sector in order to preserve lives, which may restrict resource allocation to the agriculture and industrial sectors, causing food production and input supply chains to be hampered. [28] As a result of COVID 19, the world economy is expected to contract by 3.2 percent, with 34.3 million people falling below the poverty line. [32] COVID-19-induced reactions, according to UNU-WIDER, may cut 20% of global income or consumer spending, putting an additional 420–580 million people in poverty compared to 2018. [31]. According to a study produced by the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), Bangladesh's poverty rate might have doubled (from 20.5 to 40.9 percent) since the epidemic began. [24] They also stated

that society's impoverished and vulnerable segments are growing increasingly more vulnerable, implying that societal inequality is set to worsen.

According to another study conducted by Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the country's farmers lost 565.36 billion takas during the 45-day shutdown between March and May. [2] During the epidemic, dairy and poultry producers, in particular, suffered significant losses. Dairy farmers were reportedly forced to sell milk for Tk. ten per kilogram and lower and were even forced to toss milk on the road, while poultry producers were discovered spoiling eggs and killing day-old chicks and burying them in the whole. [4] The price of essential everyday items has risen due to the lockdown, which has disrupted the country's supply-chain structure, making the lives of unemployed people precarious. [30] Many imported commodities were stranded at the Chittagong ports, and many perishable agricultural items rotted owing to a lack of transportation and shipment during the epidemic, causing farmers to lose money and raising the cost of living for the poor. [21] The country's industrial sector, particularly the readymade garments industry, experienced a significant setback as a result of the epidemic. This sector accounts for almost 80% of the country's overall export profits, and at least 4 million employees rely on it for their livelihood. After the epidemic ravaged Europe and the United States of America, this industry's exports dropped by as much as 84 percent in April 2020 compared to the previous year. More than 1,000 factories have closed due to COVID-19, and 2.19 million people have lost their. [2] Similarly, the epidemic has affected the country's second key source of foreign cash revenues, remittances. Due to COVID-19, Bangladesh has a 13 million Bangladeshi migrant population and a 30 million dependent population. [18] As a result, remittance inflows fell by 12% in March and 25% in April compared to the previous year. [6] According to a study conducted by Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), more than 0.5 million migrant workers went home from February to May 2020 (YPSA, 2020). The World Bank also claims that Bangladesh's remittance inflow might increase. Due to these measures, Bangladesh has changed its face from typical poverty to new difficult phases to imagine.

FOOD SECURITY

Low-income groups and the urban poor are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, a condition defined by restricted or unpredictable access to sufficient, nutritious food for an active, healthy life. In both the short and long term, food insecurity is linked to a variety of adverse health effects. During the epidemic, food insecurity is increasing in Bangladesh. Bangladesh was placed 84th out of 113 nations in the [15], well below several of its neighbours. [10] Due to debt, temporary or permanent job loss, or catastrophic disease, the present pandemic crisis is hurting the food security of households that were not impoverished prior to the outbreak. As a result, there were likely to upset the daily food intake balance that would be expected under normal conditions. To achieve minimal food security for daily wage-based worker households, [22] estimate a minimum compensation package of roughly US \$

1 per day per household for farm and nonfarm households. From the previous estimate, food costs in afflicted nations rose dramatically during outbreaks such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola, posing a severe threat to food security, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, children, and marginalized people. [13] In Bangladesh, for example, food price increases in 2007–08 pushed another 13 million people into poverty. [5] Furthermore, according to a recent survey, 75% of those polled said they did not have enough food, while 91% said they didn't have enough money to buy food. [14] As a result, food insecurity rose dramatically across families and began to impact previously disadvantaged groups. Food insecurity is likely to rise in the future unless immediate efforts are made to alleviate it. [3]

The main threats to food security in the aftermath of the pandemic are already visible, and they stem from higher retail prices paired with lower wages. Many people have cut back on their fresh fruits and vegetable purchases due to a lack of availability, increased pricing, fewer trips to the shop, and fears about contamination. As a result of these reasons, an increasing number of households are being forced to reduce their food intake in both quantity and quality. Reduced calorie intake and poor nutrition jeopardize poverty reduction and health advances and may have long-term consequences for young children's cognitive development. [3] However, The COVID-19 epidemic casts a bleak future over humanity, but it also offers endless opportunities to restart the process of creating a sustainable food system. The pandemic highlighted a broken government and social system that failed to understand the impact of pandemics on food security at the outset. It also demonstrated that the government's efforts were insufficient to meet Bangladeshis' fundamental food needs. COVID-19 also shifted the focus of our economic concerns. It allows us to reorganize our efforts to create a food-secure and poverty-free society. [9] In addition, resilience programming is needed to help people prepare for unpredictable and unknown risks. [25]

CONCLUSION

While dealing with the extended crisis, the government must explore the possibilities of learning from people's social, cultural, and economic habits (Kabir, et.al.,2019). Food is a human's first and most fundamental need, and it should be at the heart of any rehabilitation or social safety strategy. Agriculture, in particular, should be given the utmost attention in rebuilding plans. Farmers should be encouraged, agricultural marketing should be prioritized, and forums for them to express their opinions should be created. To lead a thorough recovery and boost preparation for coping with food insecurity, they should also develop a farmer-consumer focused producing-processing-marketing-selling system for resilience. [26]Further, these can act as a source of poverty reduction strategy too. Despite the resumption of industrial activities, the partial lockdown in Bangladesh owing to the COVID-19 pandemic boosted economic hardship and severe poverty. Due to the loss of lives and livelihoods, the pandemic has produced emotional and socio-economic instability among individuals. [17]

REFERENCES

- [1]. Abi-Habib, M. (2020). Millions had risen out of poverty. Coronavirus is pulling them back. *The New York Times*. [Online] Published April 30, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/world/asia/coronavirus-poverty-unemployment.html/>
- [2]. Ahmed, Z. (2020). Coronavirus: economy down, poverty up in Bangladesh. *Deutsche Welle*, Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-economy-down-poverty-up-in-bangladesh/a-53759686>
- [3]. Ahmed, F., Islm, A., Pakrashi, D., Rahman, T., & Siddique, A. (2021). Determinants and dynamics of food insecurity during COVID-19 in rural Bangladesh. *Food Policy*. doi:10.1016/j.foodpol.2021.102066
- [4]. Begum, M., Farid, M. S., Barua, S., & Alam, M. J. (2020). *COVID-19 and Bangladesh: socio-economic analysis towards the future correspondence*. [Preprints]. doi: 10.20944/preprints202004.0458.v1
- [5]. Balagtas, J. V., Bhandari, H., Cabrera, E., R., Mohanty, S., & Hossain, M. (2014). Did the commodity price spike increase rural poverty? Evidence from a long-run panel in long-run panel in Bangladesh. *Agric Econ*, 45, 303–312. doi:10.1111/agec.12066
- [6]. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). (2019). *Statistical Pocketbook*. Dhaka: BBS, Government of Bangladesh.
- [7]. Bodrud-Doza, M., Shammi, M., Bahlman, L., Islam, M. T., and Rahman. M. M. (2020). Psychosocial and Socio-Economic Crisis in Bangladesh Due to COVID-19 Pandemic: A Perception-Based Assessment.” *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8, 341. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2020.00341
- [8]. Cookson, F. (April 15, 2020). OP-ED: How Covid-19 has impacted the Bangladesh economy. *DhakaTribune*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/2020/07/29/op-ed-how-covid-19-has-impacted-the-bangladesh-economy>
- [9]. Dev, D. S., & Kabir, K. H. (2020). COVID-19 and food security in Bangladesh: A chance to look back at what is done and what can be done. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 9(4), 143–145. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2020.094.008>
- [10]. Economist Impact, (2020). *Global Food Security Index*. Retrieved from, Global Food Security Index (GFSI) (economist.com)
- [11]. Egger, Dennis et al. (2021). Falling living standards during the COVID-19 crisis: Quantitative evidence from nine developing countries. *Science Advances*, 7(6). doi:10.1126/sciadv.abe0997
- [12]. FAO, (2020). *The state of food security and nutrition in the world. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. Retrieved from: https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000117811/download/?_ga=2.198835695.1795240352.1614160025-272927284.1614160025.

- [13]. Fan., S. (2020). Preventing global food security crisis under COVID-19 emergency. Washington D.C.: *International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)*, pp. 1–5. Retrieved from <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/preventing-global-food-security-crisis-under-covid-19-emergency>
- [14]. Government of Bangladesh. (2020). COVID-19: *Bangladesh Multi-Sectoral Anticipatory Impact and Needs Analysis*. Dhaka. Retrieved from [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/COVID_NAWG Anticipatory Impacts and Needs Analysis.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/COVID_NAWG_Anticipatory_Impacts_and_Needs_Analysis.pdf)
- [15]. Global Food Security Index, (2020). *2020 Global Food Security Index | Top 10 countries for food security*. Retrieved from 2020 Global Food Security Index | Top 10 Countries For Food Security (moneycontrol.com)
- [16]. Hasan, M., T., Das, A., S., Ahmed, A., I., Chowdhury, A., R., & Rashid, S., F. (2021). COVID-19 in Bangladesh: an especially difficult time for an invisible population, *DISABILITY & SOCIETY*, 36(8), 1362-1367. doi:10.1080/09687599.2021.1929080
- [17]. Kabir , M.S.,Radović -Marković, M., Radulović, D.,(2019). The Determinants of Income of Rural Women in Bangladesh,Bazel, Švajcarska,Sustainability, December , str. 1-13, vol. 11 , no.20. <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/20/5842> ,ISSN 2071-1050
- [18]. Karim, M. R., Islam, M. T., & Talukder, B. (2020). COVID-19's impacts on migrant workers from Bangladesh: In search of policy intervention. *World Development*, 136, 105123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105123>
- [19]. Kumar, B., & Pinky S. D. (2021). Addressing economic and health challenges of COVID-19 in Bangladesh: Preparation and response. *J Public Affairs*. 2020, 2556. doi:10.1002/pa.2556
- [20]. Laborde, D., Martin, W., & Vos, R. (2020). *Poverty and food insecurity could grow dramatically as COVID-19 spreads*. Retrieved from [https://www.ifpri.org/blog/poverty-and-food -insecurity-could-grow-dramatically-covid-19-spreads/](https://www.ifpri.org/blog/poverty-and-food-insecurity-could-grow-dramatically-covid-19-spreads/)
- [21]. Mohiuddin, A. K. (2020). A pandemic review of Covid-19 situation in Bangladesh. *Journal of Bioscience & Biomedical Engineering*, 1(1), 1–9. doi: 10.37547/tajmspr.v2i05.345
- [22]. Mottaleb K., A, Mainuddin, M, & Sonobe, T. (2020). COVID-19 induced economic loss and ensuring food security for vulnerable groups: Policy implications from Bangladesh. *PLoS ONE*, 15(10): e0240709. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0240709
- [23]. Raihan, S., Bidisha, S. H., Uddin, M., Ahmed, M. T., Nahar, M. A., & Naher, J. (2020). *COVID -19 Fallout on Poverty and Livelihoods in Bangladesh: Results from SANEM's Nation -wide Household Survey* (November -December 2020). Sanem: Dhaka. Retrieved from COVID-19 Fallout on Poverty and Livelihoods in Bangladesh (sanemnet.org)
- [24]. Raihan, D. S. (2020). Covid-19 induced economic crisis in Bangladesh: what needs to be done? *The Business Standard*, Retrieved from

<https://tbsnews.net/analysis/covid-19-induced-economic-crisisbangladesh-what-needs-be-done-80197>

- [25]. Radović-Marković, M., (2018), Organizational resilience and business continuity: Theoretical and conceptual framework, *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Resilience*, 2018, Year I, number 1, pp. 5-11.
- [26]. Radović Marković, M., (2016). Managing organisational resilience in changeable business environment. In : RADOVIĆ MARKOVIĆ, Mirjana (ed.), et al. Book of Abstracts. Belgrade : Institute of Economic Sciences, 2016, pp. 77-79.
- [27]. Rashid, S. F., Theobald, S., & Ozano, K. (2020). Towards a socially just model: Balancing hunger and response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. *BJM Glob Health*, 5, e002715. doi:10.1136/bmjgh-2020-002715
- [28]. Readon T, Bellemare MF, & Ziliberman D. (2020). How COVID-19 may disrupt food supply chains in developing countries. International Food Policy Research Institute. Washington D.C. *International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)*; 2020, 1–6. Available: <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/how-covid-19-may-disrupt-food-supply-chains-developing-countries>
- [29]. Sarwar, S. M., Tarafder, S., Rahman, M. M., Razzak, K. B., Bushra, A., & Rahman, S. (2020). COVID 19 Outbreaks and Impact on Developing Countries like Bangladesh. *Asian Journal of Research in Infectious Diseases*, 4(3), 18-21. doi:10.9734/AJRID/2020/v4i3330148
- [30]. Sen, S., Antaram, N., Sen, S., & Chowdhury, S. (2020). The apparel workers are in the highest vulnerability due to COVID-19: A study on the Bangladesh Apparel Industry. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 8(3), 1–7. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3669298>
- [31]. Sumner A, Hoy C, & Ortiz-juarez E. (2020). Estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty. Helsinki;. *Report No.: WIDER Working Paper 2020 / 43*. Available: <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/Publications/Working-paper/PDF/wp2020-43.pdf>
- [32]. United Nations. (2020, b). World Economic Situation And Prospects. COVID-19 Disrupting lives, *Econ Soc. New York. Report No.: April 2020 Briefing No. 136*. Available: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-april-2020-briefing-no-136/> 35.
- [33]. United Nation, (2020, a). *How is COVID-19 affecting food security?* Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/how-is-covid-19-affecting-food-security/>.
- YPSA. (2020). *Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on returned migrants in Bangladesh. Young Power on Social Action*. Retrieved from <http://ypsa.org/2020/06/research-on-socio-economic-impact-of-covid-19-on-returnee-migrants-in-bangladesh/>