

Chapter 20

Sustainability Issues and Livelihood Coping Strategies in the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh tells us that economic activities and alternative livelihoods have been disturbed. There are challenges in the areas of equitable distribution of resources and providing economic support to the disadvantaged groups (cash and kind support, food supports, social safety net). This research explores the short term livelihood coping strategies to respond to and recover from COVID-19 with a special focus on socio-demography, socio-economy, food security, and health aspect. As the crisis develops, future rounds of representative monitoring data on the same respondents will help us understand the evolving impacts and potential recovery.

INTRODUCTION

Onset of early 2020, the COVID-19 enthralled the globe suddenly (Nagel, 2020 cited in Soheli et al., 2021) and many people on this earth affected by the virulent virus (Adhikari et al., 2020). At first the Coronavirus was recognized in Bangladesh on 8 March 2020 and spread over the country. The Government of Bangladesh declared first time strict lockdown during the period of 26 March to 30 May 2020 (Hamadani et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic affects livelihood of marginalized people especially in Bangladesh. It has been led to preminent levels of mental health shocks such as sleep problems, depressive issues, and post-traumatic stress symptoms. It is well known to all that China is the first country where COVID-19 caused pandemic situation in the world. The affected people suffered by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The more consequences of pandemic, the negative impact on livelihood of the pandemic that resulted in an unprecedented lockdown of daily life and economic activities might account for part of the mental health problems in participants whose earning capacities are declining. The COVID-19 pandemic began as a livelihood crisis but has in time

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triggered a grave and unfolding economic crisis with particular concerns for the poor and vulnerable. Very low-income people have been the quickest and hardest hit in their daily lives including economic crisis, health crisis, especially those living in urban and peri-urban areas and working in the informal sector. The necessity of factual evidence cannot be over-emphasized for effective policy response to the poverty moments of the contagion. The socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 should be reduced for which a proactive management approach should be followed, health policies should be taken by considering social detriments of health, employment opportunity, awareness and public private partnership network and linkages should be strengthen to combat pandemic situations like COVID-19 among mass population. In this regard there is immense needs of both national, and international collaboration for charity funding and more investment in health sector of the state. The country especially Bangladesh declared lockdown at the national level in the middle of March 2020, which caused huge hardship and negative impact on the marginalized livelihoods of the nation, grasping poor people who lives on hand to mouth. Huge number of household livelihood was affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. The loss of livelihood activities are immeasurable and the impact was high to extreme. It means that the marginalized people turned into more marginalized and fall into the category of hardcore poor due to COVID-19. Several studies investigated different dimension of health wellbeing and other consequences such as economic growth, poverty, income loss, mental depression (Janssen et al., 2021; Guo et al., 2020; Niles et al., 2020; prime et al., 2020). The study aims to look at the direct impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods of the marginalized people and their household welfare, by understanding all sorts of shocks including economic shocks of the poor and vulnerable people are facing, what coping mechanisms they are using and whether there are systematic variations among different demographic and occupational groups. The study eventually deployed to analyze not only livelihoods and coping during the COVID-19 crisis and lockdown but included an added effort on repossession crescendos. The study was conducted with the key purpose of to know the livelihood impacts and explore livelihood coping strategies during COVID-19 pandemic situation and post lockdown crisis. Hence, this study evaluate these effects, at least in the short-term. It indicates that they have divers option for coping strategies that have lower likelihood of longer-term detrimental impacts on the household. It is recognized that the financial coping strategies available to rural households are able to rely upon their personal incomes and savings to a much greater extent than urban slum households. A substantial number of households of whom, in contrast, have been forced to rely upon borrowing money from different sources. Recent statistics of the International Labour Organization (2021) revealed that because of the Coronavirus pandemic, fifty percent of the global workforce may lose their livelihoods, as 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy are at immediate risk of losing their income source. The ongoing pandemic will not only affect the national economy but also the financial status of millions of families in Bangladesh. The marginalized people including rickshaw-pullers, day-laborers, domestic workers, transport workers, street vendors, and construction laborers become jobless due to COVID-19 lock down. It indicates that they are the worst sufferers of this outbreak. The lockdown created economic hardship for the low and middle income people. They lived in psychological anxiety, stress, and fear even hunger by losing their jobs and income (Mandal et al., 2021). The immense negative impacts are multidimensional that gives stress on the livelihood of the vulnerable communities during the endemic crisis. Additionally, it gave birth of an unprecedented lockdown of daily life and economic activities dwindling earning capacities. The more devastating exposure of the pandemic through the media propagate more mental health problems as individuals may feel intense empathic concern and distress witnessing or constantly hearing about other people's painful struggles with the coronavirus (Egger et al., 2020). There is immense need of study on the sustainable

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