



# COVID-19

COVID-19 is expected to disproportionately affect Bangladesh's poor and most vulnerable, including informal slum settlement residents, the rural poor and extreme poor, sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, refugees, persons living with disabilities, sex workers, domestic workers, factory workers, daily-wage earners, and so forth. Without comprehensive mitigating measures, these groups will be among the worst affected from a personal, social, health and economic perspective. It is therefore of critical importance for immediate research to be conducted for informing and providing appropriate insights into: (1) the types of decisive action and policies that must be undertaken to blunt the impact in these communities, and (2) the designing of short, medium, and long-term rehabilitation programs.

The School, with its large multidisciplinary team of researchers comprising of epidemiologists, medical anthropologists, anthropologists, biostatisticians, development economists, health economists, statisticians, health policy and health system experts,

implementation researchers, nutritionists, doctors and social scientists, who are actively working together to conduct research in many vulnerable communities and populations, firmly believe that the pandemic is a socio-economic phenomenon as much as it is a biological one. Our aim, therefore, is for a comprehensive approach to understanding people's vulnerability to illness and disease, perception and knowledge about COVID-19, level of comprehension and acceptance of the preventive messaging, access or barriers to health care, impact on behaviors and fears, stigma, influence of cultural norms and values, and the structural, social, political and economic realities of their everyday lives.

To this end, the School is carrying out rapid large-scale surveys, qualitative case studies, and short focused ethnographies with diverse communities. Research briefs with key findings will be regularly posted on our website with the hope that the evidence documented will be of critical value for adapting and improving our national response.