

RESEARCH COVID-19



BRAC SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
JAMES P. GRANT





Survey on Consumer Awareness of Nutrition, Food Safety and Hygiene during COVID-19

Timeline: January, 2020-December, 2020

Researchers: Nepal C Dey, Kaosar Afsana, Malay Kanti Mridha, Abu Ahmed Shamim, Md. Abdul Awal, Mahmood Parvez, Mir Raihanul Islam, Fahmida Akter
Brief Overview: It is a nationwide survey funded by FAO to identify the people's knowledge of nutrition, food safety and hygiene basics at consumer level. It will work as a baseline of nutrition, food safety and hygiene knowledge across different populations in Bangladesh and will allow the Government and other stakeholders to develop a coordinated approach to address knowledge gaps and to monitor progress over time. Tentative date of data collection is as follows- Start date: 20 June; End date: 20 August 2020

Objectives:

1. To assess the knowledge of basic nutrition, cooking best practices, food safety and hygiene principles of a sample of the country that will be representative of different:
 - Districts of the country as well as nationally
 - Age groups and stages of the life cycle
 - Gender
 - Socio economic groups
2. To compare knowledge levels to a simple assessment of people's dietary practices, nutritional behavior and status, and overall health.
3. To identify factors associated with different levels of knowledge and awareness.
4. Changes of hygiene behavior due to COVID-19 in different settings of Bangladesh

Methodology: A cross sectional study design will be followed to conduct the study.

Partners and Donors: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



Media Surveillance on Coronavirus

Timeline: January, 2020- ongoing

Researchers: Prof. Syed Masud Ahmed, Samiun Nazrin Bente Kamal Tune, Md. Zakir Hossain Pinto, Mehedi Hasan and Nasir Uddin

Implemented by: CoE-HS&UHC, BRAC JPGSPH

Brief Overview: On January 7, China reported the identification of a new corona virus nCoV (later COVID-19) and on 11th, the first death from it, followed by cases in other Asian countries and in the USA. Since, the media coverage of the new 2019-nCoV epidemic has been increasing worldwide. Most articles, reports and TV or internet news inform on the number of cases and on public health measures taken by health authorities.

The media both shape opinions and reflect them, in a way that may be site- or country-specific. Showing which themes are highlighted by the media in a country and how, the reasons for this local construction and the role played by the media, and the way representations circulate is important to understand the social construction of a new disease and associated population perception and trust towards the epidemic response. Considering this experience, the documentation of the main media coverage regarding the coronavirus epidemic (print and visual) in Bangladesh from the very beginning (here from 1st January) may help in understanding people's perception and reaction about the breaking epidemic. The latter can be elicited by collecting the online comments that follow articles in the print media.

Objectives:

1. To document the messages and meanings spread by the print and visual media at the national level in Bangladesh through a selective and ordered collection of news reports, articles and videos
2. To document the reactions and opinions of the populations to media coverage through the collection of online readers' comments to these articles and reports.

Methodology: Four researchers are collecting and reviewing reports, articles, op-ed etc. from newspapers, talkshows/ programmes on COVID-19, and selecting websites from Alexa . The extracted data will be summarized, thematically analyzed and will be redacted as a report.

Funded by: BRAC JPGSPH



A Quick Assessment of Knowledge, Perceptions, Barriers And Enablers, and Experiences of the Frontline Health Workers (FLWs) Vis-à-vis Covid-19 Epidemic Management in Bangladesh

Timeline: March 2020- May 2020

Researchers: Prof. Syed Masud Ahmed, Bushra Zarin Islam, Mir Raihanul Islam, Samiun Nazrin Bente Kamal Tune, Zarin Tasnim, Md. Zakir Hossain Pinto and Nahitun Naher.

Implemented by: CoE-HS&UHC, BRAC JPGSPH

Brief Overview: From WHO's declaration of Covid-19 as a Global Public Health Emergency in January 2020 to identification of first case in the country in early March 2020, Bangladesh got a valuable lead time of around 5 to 7 weeks to prepare the people and the health

systems for the outbreak. However, neither the MoHFW nor the political establishment was found to rise to the occasion and provide the necessary stewardship for coordinated response to contain the outbreak. Uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies of the MoHFW and the government at large and there was lack of coordination among them which baffle any description. It has now entered the community transmission phase when experts are expecting a surge in the number of the patients and a catastrophic scenario for the poorly prepared health systems.

In this this scenario, it is important to look at the conditions of the health workers who are at the frontline of fight against COVID-19. This quick assessment is being done to elicit the knowledge, perceptions, barriers and enablers, and lived social experiences by the FLWs vis-à-vis management of COVID-19 epidemic currently sweeping the country.

Methodology: This time-bond study of cross sectional design by mixed method approach is currently being conducted.

Donor: Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW)



Adapting with the Context: 'One BRAC' Story in COVID-19 Response in Bangladesh

Timeline: March 29th- May 31st, 2020

Researchers: Dr. Kaosar Afsana, Dr. Fouzia Khanam, Nazrana Khaled, Ishrat Jahan, Selima Sara Kabir, Brief Overview: BRAC's COVID-19 response has a three-pronged approach which will be followed by long term livelihood support work for the economically

affected families:

- (i) Protection of Staff & Community
- (ii) Communication and mass awareness
- (iii) New Partnerships for Prevention, Detection, & Response. BRAC's overarching focus for the COVID-19 response in Bangladesh is to prevent community-level outbreak as much as possible in the coming days by mobilizing over 90,000 field staff and community health volunteers to reach millions of households.

In public health emergencies, we often do not prioritize documentation of the rapid response processes undertaken by large organizations like BRAC that have played a critical role in the history of the country

Methodology: Design, Timeline, Participants and Tools: A Process Documentation Research (PDR) design was undertaken to document the response. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and In-depth Interviews (IDIs) were used with chosen participants. Themes included BRAC's overall response to the crisis as well as the particular functional area's responses.

Name of Partners: BRAC



Front Line Health Workers' (FLWs) Perceptions and Opinions on their Personal Safety while Attending Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Patients in Bangladesh

Timeline: 31st March- ongoing

Researchers: Prof. Syed Masud Ahmed, Bushra Zarin Islam, Mir Raihanul Islam, Samiun Nazrin Bente Kamal Tune, Zarin Tasnim and Md. Zakir Hossain Pinto

Implemented by: CoE-HS&UHC, BRAC JPGSPH

Brief Overview: This research brings up how imperative it is to safeguard the FLWs with necessary amenities so

that they can attend the suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients without any hesitation and stress. This quick telephone survey was done to elicit the perceptions of the FLWs regarding personal safety against contracting the infection when attending suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients. Besides their opinions on the problem of shortage and recommendations on how to resolve it so that the misunderstanding before the media/policy makers/people is mitigated and their morale is boosted to serve the humanity. 75% doctors and nurses and around 40% of the support staff got PPE after COVID-19 outbreak; however, quality of the PPEs supplied was questioned by respondents. The FLWs wanted proper protection (PPE and others) for all for handling patients in community transmission stage in preference to monetary incentives. Not all FLWs got necessary training on COVID-19 disease, its management and prevention, and use of PPE. Concerns for spreading the infection to family members was precipitating mental health problems (stress, anxiety, insomnia) of the FLWs, affecting their performance along with becoming physically exhausted from continued duty without proper rest and food. The respondents were not content about the role played by different professional associations during Covid-19 crisis.

Methodology: This time-bond survey adopted a cross-sectional design of mixed method approach. Data were collected during the six days from 9 to 14 Apr. 2020 the under lock-down condition with telephone interview. Descriptive analysis was done for the quantitative data and qualitative data were thematically analyzed.

Donor: Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW)



COVID-19 Impact on Urban Slums and Low Income Settlement: Education, Psychosocial Wellbeing and Coping

Timeline: 1st March- Ongoing

Researcher Team Members: Dr. Sabina Faiz Rashid, Maheen Sultan (BIGD), Farhana Alam, Samira Ahmed Raha, Alvira Farheen Ria, Sajib Rana, Saklain Al Mamun (BIGD), Prantik Roy, Taslima Aktar (BIGD), Mehedi Hasan Anik (BIGD), Farhana Alam

Brief Overview: In Bangladesh, the total number of slum dwellers accounts for 6.33% of the urban population and 1.48% of the total population of the country (Population and Housing Census 2011). Most residents of slums and low income settlements, survive on daily wages which only allows them to have little to no savings. Moreover, these low income settlements are crowded, where big families live in single rooms with shared latrines and kitchens, and also lack basic health services. Thus, preventive measures for this pandemic such as maintaining hygiene and distancing from others is not a feasible option in such areas. Adolescents, who are in a transition period in their lives both physically and emotionally tend to be affected in specific ways in such conditions. This rapid qualitative research therefore attempts to understand the impact of the pandemic and countrywide lockdown on the lived realities of adolescent boys and girls, living in slums and low- income settlements in Dhaka.

Objectives:

1. To understand the impact of Covid-19 and state sanctioned lockdown on lives and education of adolescents living in urban slums and low income settlements.
2. To identify the factors affecting psychosocial wellbeing of adolescents and to explore their coping strategies during the pandemic.

Methodology: Qualitative research methods via phone interviews

Partners and Donors: BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health is conducting this research in collaboration with BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD). This research is part of the multi country mixed method longitudinal research and evaluation study 'Gender & Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE)' managed by Overseas Development Institute (ODI), funded by UKAID.



Understanding knowledge and awareness on COVID-19 (Corona disease) and its impact on Livelihoods and life of Rohingya Refugee Camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Timeline: April- May 30th , 2020

Researchers: Saira Parveen Jolly, Mahmuda Akhtar Sarkar, Kaosar Afsana

Brief Overview: In response to the present threat of COVID-19, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and its partners took several initiatives to address the impending health crisis among the Rohingya refugees in camps of Cox's Bazar. This study is aimed to understand the knowledge and awareness of the Rohingya population on the Covid-19 disease and changes transpiring in their livelihood and lives.

Methodology: We conducted a rapid qualitative study using case study approaches during April 2020. We conducted telephone interviews.



Livelihood, food security and well-being of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Timeline: 15th April 2020-15th May 2020

Researchers: Md. Tanvir Hasan, Fatema Akter Bonny, Irin Akhter, Aditya Shayantony Das, Arifa Binte Mohsin, Md. Hosaim Aftab Evan, Sudipta Das Gupta, Md. Tareq Hasan, Adepto Intisar, Amina Amin, and Sabina Faiz Rashid

Brief Overview: The COVID-19 pandemic is taking a toll on the lives of people across the borders. Persons with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable population groups that suffer the most during such pandemic situation. This research was conducted with an aim to explore the impacts of COVID-19 crisis on the livelihoods, food security and overall well-being of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh.

Objectives:

1. Understanding the immediate impact of COVID-19 on the livelihoods of persons with disabilities including the key aspects such as employment, education and social security
2. Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on the food security status of households with a disabled member
3. Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on the physical and mental health of persons with disabilities' and their adopted coping strategies
4. Exploring persons with disabilities' knowledge about COVID-19, the challenges they experience in maintaining hygiene and social distancing practices and in accessing health services

Methodology: Exploratory qualitative research methods to collect 20 case studies via phone interviews.



Stigma, Shame and COVID-19: "They Won't Even Touch the Money we Touched"

Timeline: April 19 - May 15, 2020

Researchers: Shahana Siddiqui, Nahela Nowshin

Brief Overview: This research study aims to explore how the national discourse around COVID-19 has given rise to stigma against COVID-19 in Bangladesh. The narratives and rhetoric around COVID-19 have largely been shaped by the media. Such narratives play a huge role in shaping people's knowledge and perceptions about COVID-19, including subconscious beliefs about the "carriers" of this disease. The study seeks to explore general perceptions revolving around COVID-19, identify the specific groups of people who are being subjected to stigma – both medically and socially – and bring out the anecdotal accounts of the ways in which they are being discriminated against. It is important to identify these social dimensions as they influence social behaviors amidst pandemics which have ramifications for access to health care as well as social initiatives to contain pandemics.

Methodology: This study employs three data collection tools:

- (i) English and Bangla online surveys;
- (ii) content analysis of Bangla and English news articles;
- (iii) case studies of COVID-19 positive patients in government-cordoned off residences. Content analysis of news articles was done using a priori coding mechanism and deductive thematic analysis. News articles have been selected using the purposive sampling method across seven categories of pivotal moments that shaped the narratives around stigma and COVID-19:
 - (i) migrant returnees;

- (ii) concerns about health professionals' safety put forward by FDSR;
- (iii) announcement of lockdown;
- (iv) return of garment workers to Dhaka;
- (v) residences being cordoned off;
- (vi) abandonment of people by family members; and
- (vii) suspected and confirmed COVID-19 patients fleeing.



Psychological Stress of Pregnant Women during the Coronavirus Diseases (COVID-19) Pandemic

Timeline: April, 2020 to May 30th, 2020

Researchers: Zahidul Quayyum, Hasna Hena Sara, Rafiul Alam and Delufa Tuz Jerin

Basic information: With the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, there have been negative emotions experienced by the individuals. This pandemic has changed the

healthcare landscape for many patient populations including pregnant women and the mothers which may cause changes in their mental health status as pregnancy may already be a stressful time for the women. The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be an additional unsettling consideration for those who are pregnant or trying to get pregnant. Managing stress for women who want to conceive and women who are pregnant is thus an important concern and therefore, this study aims to establish the prevalence of psychiatric symptoms and identify risk and protective factors contributing to psychological stress. This may assist government agencies and healthcare professionals in safeguarding the psychological wellbeing of the community in the face of COVID-19 outbreak expansion in Bangladesh.

Methodology: This study has adopted a cross-sectional survey design to assess the immediate psychological stress of mother and pregnant women during the epidemic of COVID-19.



Health System's Response to COVID-19 in Bangladesh: A Rapid Study on the Key Building Blocks

Timeline: April 12, 2020 – May 30th, 2020

Researchers: Zahidul Quayyum, Farzana Tamanna Umme, Babay Naznin, and Ayesha Ahmed

Brief Overview: The current COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to a catastrophic situation in Bangladesh and demanded the country's healthcare system to incorporate critical measures to mitigate the dreadful outcome of the disease. In order to assess the responsiveness of the health system, the best approach is to consider the WHO's framework that describes health systems in terms of six building blocks (service delivery, health workforce, health information systems, access to essential medicines, financing, and governance). Thus, this research attempts to document and elucidate the responses that have been made by the health system of Bangladesh in the light of WHO's six core components, i.e. the six building blocks, since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

Objectives:

1. To evaluate the initiatives taken by Bangladesh for the service delivery system in the provision screening, testing, health care and tackle the sudden surge of the COVID through health human resources
2. To evaluate the leadership and governance role of government (MOHFW) in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic
3. To assess major health systems barriers faced by the health sector while coping with the pandemic.

Methodology: This rapid study is using a mixed methods approach (both quantitative and narrative) for assessing the responsiveness of Bangladesh Health system to COVID-19.



COVID 19: Knowledge, Practices and Impact in South-Asia (Bangladesh Component)

Timeline: 16 April to 30 June 2020

Researchers: Local-Malay Kanti Mridha, Malabika Sarker, Abu Ahmed Shamim, Abu Abdullah Mohammad Hanif, Mehedi Hasan, Fahmida Akter, Md. Mokbul Hossain, Nushrat Jahan Urmey International- John C Chambers, Franco Sassi, Sujeet Jha, Anuradhani Kasturiratne, Anjana Ranjit Mohan, Ian Goon, Kusuma Dian, Ananya Gupta

Brief Overview: The objectives of this research are: i) To determine the prevalence of flu-like symptoms; ii) To assess the knowledge and practices related to the prevention and control of COVID-19; iii) To determine the health, economic and social impact of COVID-19 associated measures e.g., lock-down, social distancing etc.

Methodology: Cross-sectional survey using quantitative approach. Data are being collected from all the divisions of Bangladesh.

Partners: BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, Imperial College London

Donor: National Institute for Health Research, UK



Mental and Emotional Health and Well-being of University Students

Timeline: April 15th – July 31st 2020

Researchers: Kuhel Islam, Sameen Nasar, Rituja Shome, and Sabina Faiz Rashid

Brief Overview: More than 20% of Bangladesh's population lies between the ages of 10 and 19 years, and around 30% belong to the age group between 15-24 years. Among students aged 13-17, 4% of boys and 6% of girls consider attempting suicide due to depression². With all educational institutions shut under the current COVID-19 environment, the mental and emotional well-being of university going students risk being further negatively amplified. To address this issue, the School in partnership with Imperial College, UK will be carrying out a needs assessment to better understand the emotional and mental affects brought on by the onslaught of the pandemic on University students, and the support required to tend to their concerns.

Methodology: Semi-Structured telephone interviews, both qualitative and quantitative questions were asked to students.

Donor and Partner: Imperial College, London, UK



Immunization Backlogs: A Quick Assessment of the Effects of COVID-19 on the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) in Bangladesh

Timeline: Starting date: April – June 30th 2020

Research Team Members: Dr. Atonu Rabbani and Muhammed Nazmul

Brief Overview: The study was initiated on 15th April 2020. In the first phase, 389 households were surveyed. As the study follows a cohort design, the follow-up survey will start again in Mid-July, 2020. Hopefully, by 30th July 2020 we will be able to complete the data collection. Unfortunately, we couldn't connect to 120 households (about 20%) because of the incorrect phone numbers. We have requested the Ayesha Abed Foundation for the correct contact numbers. So, we may need to survey the remaining households once we get it.

Objectives: To understand the possible effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the EPI in Bangladesh. The study primarily focuses on identifying inoculation deferrals with respect to the immunization schedule and its association with the recent pandemic. It will help suggesting possible strategies to avoid resurgence of the targeted vaccine-preventable diseases.

Methodology: The study, as part of the ongoing rapid surveys, will take advantage of a cohort of women who gave birth between September 2019 and March 2020. The survey also includes modules on women empowerment and usage of mobile financial services. Moreover, we will conduct 4-5 Key Informant Interviews (KII) with the field officers of the immunization program. Partner and Donor: BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health is internally funding the study as part of its COVID-19 rapid research responses.



Exploring Opportunities to Improve Health Outcomes and Enable better Health Systems Delivery through Mobile Money: Impact of COVID-19

Timeline: May 2020- Ongoing

Research Team Members: Sabina Faiz Rashid, Farzana Misha, Selima Kabir, and Ishrat Jahan

Brief Overview: Given the nature of the crisis resulting in enforced “social distancing” measures, the pressure on the poor are immense with larger looming concerns of survival. During crises such as these, liquidity becomes an increasing source of concern – particularly if the quarantining of bank notes receives serious consideration to curb transmission of the virus. A possible alternative in such a scenario is the availability of Mobile Financial Services (MFS) who are well placed to serve millions of registered clients throughout the country including formal and informal workers, businesses and service industries. This research comprising of rapid survey and case studies will examine ways in which mobile financial services can impact on the user health seeking behavior and outcomes.

Methodology: Mixed Method study. The Qualitative phase has been completed, Quantitative will begin.

Donor and Partner: Gates Foundation(Donor), Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (Partner)



COVID-19 Mitigation Study among Bangladeshi Migrant Workers in Singapore

Timeline: May- August, 2020

Name of the Researchers: Kaosar Afsana, Sabina F Rashid, Ishrat Jahan, Aisha Siddika (BRAC University) in partnership with Zoe Hildon(lead/partner investigator), May O Lwin, Gwen Lai Chan, Jerney Lim (National University Singapore)

Brief Overview: In this unprecedented time of global pandemic of COVID-19, each country across the world has taken both public health and medical care measure to protect the populations from the deadly disease. In Singapore, despite taking stringent measures, the case load of COVID-19 is very high among the migrant workers but with very low case fatality rate. This study led by Saw Swee Hock School Public Health (SSHSPH), National University Singapore seeks to better understand ways to communicate and engage to reduce COVID-19 transmission through community mitigation, while maintaining social cohesion. BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University will partner with SSHSPH in the qualitative assessment of study along with other partners.

Methodology: This is a multicomponent qualitative study using discourse analysis that focuses on knowledge configuration and identifies interpretive schemes or frames which helps in the classification of phenomena. In-depth interviews will be conducted among migrant workers to understand knowledge and risk perceptions and coping mechanisms to improve communication messaging and enhance social cohesion and community empowerment.

Donor and Partner: HealthServe, BRAC JPGSPH, BRAC University, and SSHSPH, National University Singapore,



What works to continue maternal and neonatal healthcare services during COVID-19 pandemic by MANOSHI programme in urban slums of Bangladesh? -a case study.

Timeline: May to August 2020.

Name of the Researchers: Kaosar Afsana, Saira Parveen Jolly

Brief Overview: Despite an unprecedented shutdown of normal life due to COVID -19 pandemic, the BRAC Maternity Centers (BMCs) under BRAC MANOSHI programme are working in the urban slums of the City Corporations and providing their regular maternity service. Therefore, it is urgent to understand the factors that are working in both the MMWs and beneficiaries to provide and receive the services at BMCs and quality of care given by the service providers during this corona disease pandemic for prioritizing implementation of need-based intervention by MANOSHI programme.

Methodology: This will be a qualitative study. The qualitative data collection techniques key-informant interview (KII) and in-depth interview (IDI) will be applied for data collection, by using a semi-structured guideline. We will perform thematic data analysis for interpretation of the findings.



A Process Documentation of the Radio Intervention during COVID-19 Situation in Bangladesh

Name of the Researchers: Kaosar Afsana, Mrinmoy Samadder, Nazrana Khaled, Nicholas Turzo Mandol, Raafat Hasan, Nosin Nahian

Timeline: May to December 2020

Brief Overview: The growing COVID-19 crisis threatens to disproportionately hit developing countries. This global epidemic has severely affected all aspects of our physical, mental, economic, educational life. The government of Bangladesh has directed that all educational institutions remain closed. Like other educational institutions, BRAC, IED led play-labs (Cox's bazar Camp and host community) are closed as well. Play Lab is such a place that allows the children to learn with play where they get abundant joy. Due to lock down children are certain to miss the ambience of play labs. Therefore, BRAC, IED initiated a Telecommunication platform named 'P Ashe Achi'. But this initiative does not cover all the target population. Upon consultation with the Sesame Workshop New York and BRAC IED has decided to develop a radio intervention. Couple of local and one national radio station (Bangladesh Betar) will cover a number of districts of North, South and Southeast regions in Bangladesh. The language medium will be Bengali and Chatgaya (local Chittagonian dialect) used for. BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University to conduct a process documentation to narrate the operations of radio intervention and its comprehensive decisions, mitigate challenges and aim for success during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Methodology: We will use qualitative methods and techniques for this process documentation study. Key informant interview (KII) and in-depth interview (IDI) are

the main tools for conducting the research. Besides, we will participate as an observer and learner in different training sessions organized by BIED for operating their telecounseling programme hosted on online platforms.

Donor and Partner: BIED, BRAC University



Telecounselling Interventions during COVID-19 Situation in Bangladesh: A Process Documentation

Timeline: May to December 2020

Photo: UNB

Researchers: Kaosar Afsana, Mrinmoy Samadder, Nicholas Turzo Mandol, Nazrana Khaled, Raafat Hasan, Nosin Nahian

Brief Overview: The Covid-19 pandemic has huge effect on mental health which leads to psychological stress and fear of disease. In Bangladesh, people barely have any access or space to express their vulnerable mental condition and get support and empathy from any platform. Based on this context, BRAC IED along with PHWC and Kaan Pete Roi initiated Telecounselling platform 'MonerJotno Mobile E' for the people of Bangladesh is ensuring to provide psychological support so that the callers can overcome their frustration and anxiety. BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University to conduct a process documentation to illustrate the telecounselling programme operations and its current performance during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Methodology: We will use qualitative methods and techniques for this process documentation study. Key informant interview (KII) and in-depth interview (IDI) are the main tools for conducting the research. Besides, we will participate as an observer and learner in different training sessions organized by BIED for operating their telecounseling programme hosted on online platforms.

Donor and Partner: BIED



Telecommunication model towards Govt. Play Lab students: A process documentation I during COVID-19 Situation in Bangladesh

Timeline: May to December 2020

Researchers: Kaosar Afsana, Mrinmoy Samadder, Nicholas Turzo Mandol, Nazrana Khaled, Raafat Hasan, Nosin Nahian

Brief Overview: COVID 19 has severely affected the entire world. Its impact on Bangladesh is also increasing significantly. This global epidemic has severely affected all aspects of our physical, mental, economic, educational life. Bangladesh government declares lockdown and suspends the academic activities of educational institutions across the country as preventive measures. Like other educational institutions, due to the spread of Corona virus the BRAC conducted play-labs are closed as well. Play Lab is such a place that allows the children to learn with play where they get abundant joy. Due to lock down children are certain to miss the ambience of play labs. Therefore, BRAC, IED initiated a Telecommunication platform named 'Pashe Achi'. It is really a gentle gesture to keep in touch with the mother and the child in case they feel a sense of loneliness. Moreover, keeping in contact with people during this emergency situation boosts their mental strength and simultaneously to spread awareness. BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University to conduct a process documentation to illustrate the Telecommunication programme operations and its comprehensive decisions, mitigate challenges and aim for success during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Methodology: We will use qualitative methods and techniques for this process documentation study. Key informant interview (KII) and in-depth interview (IDI) are

the main tools for conducting the research. Besides, we will participate as an observer and learner in different training sessions organized by BIED for operating their telecounseling programme hosted on online platforms.

Donor and Partner: BIED



COVID-19 Impact in Bangladesh: Transmission Dynamics, Health System, Preparedness and Financing by Districts

Timeline: 1 May 2020 to 15 June 2020

Researchers: Malay K Mridha, Rina Rani Paul, Mehedi Hasan, Abu Abdullah Mohammad Hanif, Md. Mokbul Hossain, Zahidul Quayyum, Dipak K Mitra, Alain B Labrique

Brief Overview: The objective of the research is to report how COVID-19 cases will evolve in different districts of Bangladesh and what will be the district specific health care needs, resource requirements and its estimated cost, and mortality. These data will help the government of Bangladesh to implement district specific plans to prevent and control COVID-19, and plan for efficient mobilization and allocation of resources in Bangladesh.

Methodology: Mathematical modelling for the 64 districts of Bangladesh

Partners: BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University, Department of Public Health, North South University, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University

Donor: BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health



The Impact of COVID-19 on the Psychosocial Wellbeing of the Sexually Marginalized Community in Bangladesh

Timeline: May 1, 2020 - June 15, 2020.

Researchers: Maruf Rahman, Farhana Alam and, Sabina Faiz Rashid

Brief Overview: The research looks into the lives of 20 individuals from the sexually marginalized community to understand their anxieties and stress during the COVID-19 pandemic and what impacts that are creating on their psychosocial wellbeing. In this research, we will look for their personal support system and their needs to cope with these challenges. In addition, we will try to understand which kind of institutional psychosocial support systems already exist for this community and how the people from the sexually marginalized communities are accessing these supports.

Objectives:

1. To explore COVID-19 impact on the psycho-social well-being of the sexually marginalized individuals in the Bangladeshi society and identify their coping mechanism.
2. To understand the challenges faced due to lock down and the long term impact of the pandemic on the platforms/organizations and ongoing rights movements that are working for the sexually marginalized communities in Bangladesh.

Methodology: A rapid qualitative study will be conducted on 20 members from the sexually marginalized community who are living in Bangladesh. Telephone interviews will be done to collect information.



COVID 19 Shutdown: A New Threat to the Personal, Social and Economic Wellbeing of Dalit Community

Timeline: 25th May- 15th July, 2020

Researchers: Md. Mostafizur Rahman, Tasfiyah Jalil and Dr. Sabina Faiz Rashid

Brief Overview: Though usually Dalit people are thought be exclusively related to the Hindu Caste system, in our country Caste discrimination affects people from all religions and ethnicity. Dalit people live below the poverty line, being deprived of facilities and basic rights. Due to their very limited access to healthcare system, worsened by extremely weak economic status, this vulnerable group is possibly among the worst victims of COVID 19 crisis. This study will be conducted to find out the physical, mental and economic impact of COVID 19 shutdown on these people. In our research we will interview dalit people with various professions and economic status in order to ensure varied responses which will help us to draw a bigger and inclusive picture.

Objectives:

In the light of coronavirus situation, the objective of the study is to investigate:

1. The state of their physical and mental health
2. Impact on their economic aspect of life
3. Their coping mechanism in this time of crisis, and
4. Their overall lifestyle as a marginalised community

Methodology: A qualitative approach was used for this study and interviews were conducted over the telephone.

Donor and partner: The research project will be funded by CREA, India.