



## JPG COVID-19 Rapid Survey in Urban and Rural Sites

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The 2014 census conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) states 2.23 million people are currently living in slums across the country, and the number of slum dwellers has increased rapidly over the years by 60.43 percent in 17 years as of 2015. Dhaka, with a current population of around 21 million people, is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Between 1990 and 2005, the city doubled in size — from 6 to 12 million. By 2025, the U.N. predicts Dhaka will be home to more than 20 million people — larger than Mexico City, Beijing, and Shanghai. Everyday 1000 migrants enter Dhaka in search of employment as garment workers, daily laborers, rickshaw pullers, maids, informal sector workers and so forth. Chittagong, the main port city and the second largest urban center, has experienced similar trends with the number of recorded slums growing from 186 in 1997, to 2216 in the 2014 Slum Census (BBS 2015).

With 24.3 percent of the population living under the national poverty line and a large portion of the workforce involved in low skilled daily wage labor, the implications of an extended social and economic shutdown will, needless to say, be far reaching. Enforced measures are placing immense additional pressure on the urban poor as they face immediate looming concerns of survival due to curtailment of their livelihoods. Many have resorted to

borrowing from money lenders and cutting back on consumption. They also shared that the messaging of social distancing and of washing of hands was unrealistic and would not resonate given the stark reality of their dwellings where space and availability of water are luxuries beyond their reach.

A world bank study in 2014, found that about 47 million people still live in poverty and 70 percent of them live in rural areas. Rural poverty continues to be significantly higher and more extreme than urban. Extreme poverty continues to be a rural phenomenon and the poorest in the poorest regions are also less able to cope with shocks such as natural disasters. Rural poverty and food security thus remain critical development challenges, and worries about their health and services in the context of the pandemic is an added burden to their existing vulnerabilities.

The survey will draw samples from several nationally representative surveys as well as surveys carried out by the School over the past year and a half addressing specific population groups such as RMG workers, informal settlement residents, rural poor, adolescents and adult men and women among others. The survey is being conducted via phone interviews, with follow ups, towards understanding the possible effects of the pandemic on several domains of a household or family such as consumption, income, health, coping strategies, psychological well-being, and gender issues. The survey will have a dynamic approach in the sense that the questions and approaches will be modified based on current understandings and relevant emerging issues related to the crisis.