

## Original Research

# Impact of COVID-19 on Rickshaw Puller of Dhaka City

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## Abstract

*Background: Bangladesh have been experiencing overwhelming population growth and extreme poverty. This is, in part, a result of rural poverty, which has led to the migration of poor people from rural to urban areas in search of a better life, better job opportunities and better social services. Objectives: To assess the impact of COVID 19 on the rickshaw puller. Methods: Cross sectional quantitative analysis on rickshaw pullers. Result: Rickshaw pullers daily income declines 64.375%. Depend on their income they decrease their daily cost and expenses as well. Conclusion: Those who are staying back in Dhaka might observe stable or increased income due to reduced number of rickshaw pullers on the street; as such the impact of COVID 19 on those who have left Dhaka need to be assessed separately.*

## INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh have been experiencing overwhelming population growth and extreme poverty. This is, in part, a result of rural poverty, which has led to the migration of poor people from rural to urban areas in search of a better life, better job opportunities and better social services. Most of these rural migrants are absorbed into the urban informal sector, in such activities as petty retail trade, transport, manufacturing, construction and domestic services <sup>1</sup>. Along with the rest of the world, Bangladesh is preparing to undertake a range of measures to protect its population from the COVID-19 and its long- term socio-economic and humanitarian impacts. COVID-19 which was declared a pandemic by WHO on 30 January 2020 has already increased the pressure on an already strained humanitarian system, both globally and in Bangladesh. In the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, the UN

Secretary General highlighted the need to protect the most vulnerable communities in society who will be severely affected during this time. These anticipatory needs analysis aims to provide timely evidence with which to plan an effective and coordinated humanitarian response focusing on the most vulnerable communities in Bangladesh that will be impacted as a result of the fallout from COVID-19 response <sup>2</sup>. It will also supplement, but not overlap with the national COVID-19 preparedness and response, and Rohingya refugee COVID-19 response plans. Most vulnerable groups in Bangladesh primarily rely on daily income sources, and the loss of these income sources has required them to resort to negative coping mechanisms which will have long- term implications. Further specific needs and vulnerabilities around gender, disability, age, ethnicity (indigenous groups), returnee migrant workers, income

levels and employment type continue to emerge and will increase with time. While it is difficult to predict all downstream impacts of the current situation, early planning and preparation for emerging and known challenges will be critical for the humanitarian sector to be prepared to mobilize and respond in a timely manner<sup>3</sup>. The current lockdown and quarantine situation cause a significant number of people to lose their livelihoods or have limited livelihood options. Especially the daily rickshaw pullers are likely at risk of unemployment and joblessness. The nationwide economic shutdown sparked by COVID-19 threatens millions of livelihoods in Bangladesh, leaving many jobless and hungry. The rickshaw pullers of Dhaka, most of whom are the only earning members of their families, are some of the hardest hits<sup>4</sup>.

## OBJECTIVES

To assess the impact of COVID 19 on the rickshaw puller.

## METHODS

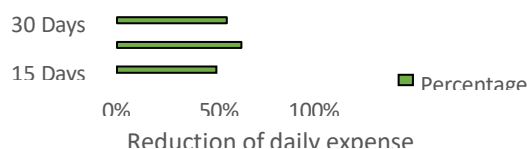
For this study we had choose cross sectional quantitative analysis. For data collection, we had divided Dhaka city into parts, which were Dhaka South City Corporation, and Dhaka North City Corporation. Random sampling had been occur in this time. We used SPSS and MS Excel for data input and data analysis.

## RESULT

**Table-1:** Distribution of respondents.

Location	Frequency	Percentage
DSCC	35	46.67%
DNCC	40	53.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

In this table showed that total respondent was 75. Among them 53.33%, respondents were from Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and 46.67% respondent was from Dhaka South City Corporation.



**Figure-1:** Reduction of Daily expenses

**Table-2:** Socio-Demographic distribution of rickshaw pullers:

Socio-demographic status	Frequency	Average	Percentage
<b>Age</b>			
50≥	30	46.50 yr.	40%
50≤	45		60%
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	75	N/A	100%
Female	0		0
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married	72	N/A	96%
Unmarried	3		4%
<b>Type of Housing</b>			
Slum	69	N/A	92%
Semi- slum	6		8%
Building	0		0%

Given table showed the frequency of Age, Sex, Marital Status and Type of housing.

**Table-3:** Daily income of rickshaw puller, difference between before and during COVID 19 situation.

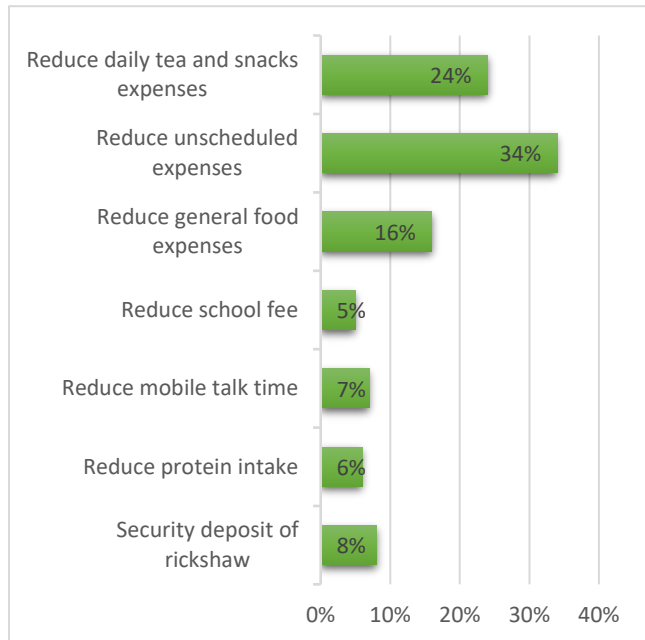
Income	Frequency	Avg. daily earning (TK)	Change of income (TK)	Change in percentage
before covid 19	75	800		
During covid 19	75	285	-515	-64.375%

Above table show that the difference of daily income of rickshaw puller.

## DISCUSSION

Number off respondent of this study was 75, which was sampled from two cluster of Dhaka. Dhaka North City Corporation hold maximum 53.33% (40) rickshaw puller and rest of the 46.67% rickshaw puller from Dhaka

South City Corporation (Table-1). Among 75 rickshaw pullers, 60% comes from northern area, 30% from southern coastal area, 7% from southeast region and 3% from central region of Bangladesh. Average age of respondents was 46.50 year. The respondents were male. Usually, male pulls the rickshaw.



**Figure-2:** Patterns of expenses reduction in 5 days

It is rare to find female rickshaw puller. All the respondents are married (Table 2). Between all the respondents, 40% lives in Dhaka with their family. Before COVID 19 average daily income of a rickshaw puller was 800 takas but during COVID 19 their daily income decreased by 64.375% which is around 285 takas (table-3). Because of decrease, their daily income they also cut off their daily expenses. During COVID 19, 70% of the surveyed rickshaw pullers reported of reduced income on the day of the survey if compared to the previous day. 17% of the respondents reported of increase in income on the day before the survey if compared to the previous day. In addition, 14% reported of stable income on the day before the survey if compared to the previous day. The data suggests that the income initially declined at the start of the week but started to pick up as the number of rickshaw pullers on the road started to decline. At the aggregate level the income on the day before the survey declined by only 3% from the previous day. Around 48% of the surveyed rickshaw pullers reported that they would reduce their daily expenses if the income continues to decline for next five days. This increases to 60% if the income continues to decline for 15 days. However, percentage of rickshaw pullers who

will reduce their expenses to cope with reduced income reduces to 53% if the income continues to decline for 30 days. If the income continues to decline for 30 days, most of the respondents said they will not be able to reduce expenditure any further and will resort to alternatives (returning to village or switching to other vocations) (Figure-1). If we analyzed more deeply, we can see that 8% reduce the security deposit of rickshaw, 6% reduce protein intake, 7% reduce mobile talk time, 5% reduce school fee expenses 16% reduce general food expenses, 34% reduce unscheduled expenses and 24% reduce daily tea and snacks expenses during this situation (Figure-2). Easy to understand the impact of COVID 19 on Rickshaw pullers are in difficult condition.

## CONCLUSION

The impact might be disproportionate depending on the marital status of the rickshaw pullers; a separate survey is needed on unmarried rickshaw pullers. Those who are staying back in Dhaka might observe stable or increased income due to reduced number of rickshaw pullers on the street; as such the impact of COVID 19 on those who have left Dhaka need to be assessed separately. Interventions might yield better result by targeting those who have left instead of those who have stayed back. Social safety nets will be essential if the income decline continues for more than 15 days. In such case, the safety nets should be targeted in the villages. At the current situation, the consumption behavior of the rickshaw pullers will have highest impact on street vendors and hawkers selling tea and snacks, cigarettes; if the situation worsens, the impact will be deeper on kitchen market sellers. Policies on deferring loan installment payment will have direct and immediate impact on those who have loans with MFIs; however, large percentage have informal loans and they will be the ones who are the hardest hit.

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