

Timeline

July-December 2020

Study Type

Descriptive / Surveillance

Research Implemented by IPA

Yes

Impact of the pandemic on vulnerable households with children in Bangladesh

Researchers

Emily Beam, Priya Mukherjee

Abstract

In order to understand the real-time impact of the pandemic on vulnerable households in Bangladesh, Innovations for Poverty Action, in partnership with the Underprivileged Children's Education Programme (UCEP), conducted a two-round survey across Bangladesh in July and December 2020, to provide a detailed look into households' well-being at two distinct points in the pandemic. Researchers attempted to answer questions that are pertinent to the current situation and that will provide useful and timely insights to stakeholders and policymakers alike.

During the first round, the team conducted detailed surveys with current and potential clients of UCEP, consisting of low-income households, many of whom have children who are at risk of not returning to school after the pandemic. Researchers conducted a second round of surveys in December 2020. Additionally, they used the panel of respondents interviewed in both rounds to examine changes over time. The team complemented this analysis with findings from a qualitative survey with 30 mothers conducted in December 2020, which provides more nuance and detail to better inform our understanding.

Project Outcomes of Interest

Researchers interviewed both mothers and fathers of UCEP's targeted children in each of two survey rounds. The mothers' survey asked for detailed information about the households' sources of income, any recent migration, receipt of economic assistance, food security, education activities of children, treatment of children, as well as the psychological wellbeing of the mothers and whether they had faced intimate partner violence at home. The surveys conducted with fathers asked about earnings and economic wellbeing. In the second round

researchers also measure fathers' psychological wellbeing.

Partners

Underprivileged Children's Education Program, Innovations for Poverty Action

Key Findings

- Already vulnerable households have faced significant economic hardships due to the pandemic, which has also jeopardized food security. These changes have been accompanied by changes in women's decision-making power and increased their reported incidence of intimate partner violence.
- By December 2020, economic insecurity has lessened but negative mental health impacts on mothers persist.
- Most children (71%) are continuing educational activities in some way. Few watch government-provided lessons, and fewer use online resources. Instead, those that can, rely on the help of family members, neighbors, and paid tutors.
- This persistent negative economic impact highlights the need for continued assistance for vulnerable households, which may also have cross-cutting benefits on other dimensions of household wellbeing.
- Continued economic hardship may also pose a challenge for the return to in-person schooling. Additionally, the wide variation in educational supports available to students suggests that policymakers should anticipate substantial variation in the distribution of learning losses, when developing outreach efforts or remedial programs.
- The pandemic appears to have harmed women's mental health and increased intimate partner violence, which makes the need for strengthening systems to support women's mental health and reduce intimate partner violence even more pressing.

Link to Results

Results Brief (March 2021)

Impact Goals

- Build resilience and protect the financial health of families and individuals
- Improve social-safety net responses
- Improve women's health, safety, and economic empowerment
- Keep children safe, healthy, and learning

Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

Results Status

Results