

The Impact of COVID-19 among the Most Vulnerable Groups in the Rohingya Community in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Findings from a mixed-methods participatory action research

BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University, in partnership with Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ), BRAC University, and with the financial support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, conducted participatory action research in 10 Rohingya camps in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar from November August 2020 to July 2021 with the aim to provide critical evidence to support policies and interventions to mitigate the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable groups in the Rohingya community living in the makeshift camps of Cox's Bazar.

Single Female Household Heads

98% received routine rations – food and cash, with many reporting **decrease in the quality of the food**

49% reported a **decline** in food consumption

60% took loans from neighbors and relatives

30% received COVID-19 related support from Govt. agencies (food and/or cash)

62% received COVID-19 related support from International and National Non-Govt agencies



I got food but sometimes my children want fish and meat. I could not afford those as I had to eat according to the ration provided to my family...I borrowed some money from neighbors too but how long can you go on like this?...(30 year old female)

"Yes, I had to give birth at home. What to do! Everything was closed...there were no health professionals (in hospitals) initially" (24 year old female)



Pregnant and Lactating Mothers

9% reported **disruption** in MNCH services

90% reported receiving ANC services

70% reported receiving PNC services

63% reported giving birth **at HOME**

Persons with Disabilities

54% had a physical disability

56% reported **worrying about finances**

39% reported **worrying about mental health**

56% reported **worrying about physical health**

60% reported an impact on day-to-day work



"Before the pandemic, others would help me bring my rations. But now everyone wants to stay away because of fear of the virus and just do their own work. No one helps me anymore, so I must struggle" (65 year old male)

"I am not allowed to go out without by brother or father's company. Before Corona, we (adolescent groups) used to get together and study but now it is not possible. Life has become very difficult now". (16 year old female)



Adolescents

99% had **no access to online education**

74% reported complete **STOP** in education

14% studied at home with the help of a tutor

6% reported continuing Madrasa education

Elderly People

65% reported an adverse impact on day-to-day work

76% reported **complete loss of mobility**

38% reported **worrying about family**

54% reported **worrying about family's wellbeing**

59% reported **worrying about finances**



"I didn't need any money for the hospital before. During the lockdown, I had to pay 400 BDT to get my medicine, which I could collect from the hospital without money before the lockdown. Therefore, I was left with no other choice but to beg from my neighbours to collect money for my medicine." (68 year old elderly female)