

COVID-19: AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS OF NATIONAL LOCKDOWN ON WOMEN

ABDUL KARIM GAZI

4th year Student, Department of Sociology University of Barishalm, Barishal 8200, Bangladesh

E-mail: gazikarimbu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of the study is to make information on the consequences of COVID-19 on women in Bangladesh. As the case may be, the author used a qualitative method to conduct this study. This study resulted that women faced a hard nut to crack during the lockdown, including- domestic violence; raising domestic tasks; lack of material supports; early marriage; premature pregnancy; more infected as being nurses; scarcity of economic supports; etc. Since females are doing more for the family, the family members should be attentive to them. After all, the authority should make all-out efforts people aware of the situation of women.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19; Impacts; Women; Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION:

COVID-19 is a deadly disease all over the world, caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) [1]. At the end of December 2019, in China, the health sector of Wuhan city traced suddenly a new Influenza and sent soon this report to the authority of WHO [2]. Within a few days after tracing, this virus reached indeed in many countries of the world. In this process, the virus was first traced in Bangladesh on March 8 and a patient died for COVID-19 on March 18 [3]. The fact of the matter is the virus comes in several ways but the governments have responsibilities beyond questions to protect their citizens. Therefore, China first locked down the country for COVID-19 in February

2020 to ensure social distancing among people and prevent the outbreak of this virus from pillar to post [4]. The Bangladesh government, at the outset, declared a national lockdown on March 26, closing all types of institutions, transports, and else sectors [3]. But a few services were out of lockdown and were operational medicine for making the country stable, including- food, grocery, kitchen, etc. carrying vehicles [5]. The duration of the lockdown was from March 26 to May 31 at a stretch and the government made easy lockdown from June 1 by way of continuing economic stabilization of Bangladesh. Afterward, the outbreak of COVID-19 was ongoing vastly and the government locked down subsequently the country area-wise, such as- red for high risk; yellow for middle risk; and white for virus-free zones [3]. As ill-luck would have it, despite of taking effective initiatives, a large number of Bangladeshi were infected and died. The health sector of the Bangladesh government tested 1,456,038 patients in which 297,083 were infected; 3,983 died; and 182,876 were recovered from this virus [6].

METHODOLOGY:

Since there is no way to protect people from this virus, locking down the country is a simple matter in this case. As a matter of fact, the motion of the world was damaged by this pandemic. So, researching several issues related to human beings is must need. Therefore the author aimed to find out the impact of COVID-19 on the women in Bangladesh. Consequently, the author initiated to search data on what is COVID-19; where was

traced; when came in Bangladesh; updated data on COVID-19; and the impact on girls, homemaker, and women jobholders. For the sake of discussing the theme, the author collected data from different data secondary sources, such as- research articles, organizations' reports, and newspapers. More importantly, the author used every inch qualitative method of social science research to collect, analyze, and interpret data. In consequence, this study found out a descriptive and effective result on the situation of women in Bangladesh during the national lockdown. Finally, it is a secondary data based qualitative research in nature.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

It is a simple matter that as COVID-19 is a pandemic in the meantime, every person is affected by it more or less. But it is also clear that the mode of damaging is not equal for everyone generally, such as- males lost their job; students lost their process of education; housewives subjected to violence, etc. Therefore, the author analyzed data on the crucial impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 in the case of women. In this section, the author divided the women into three categories based on their role in society, including- adolescent girls, housewives, and female job-holders.

A. Adolescent girls:

There are a large number of adolescent girls in Bangladesh, studying different levels of educational grades. Besides, they work different households' tasks for their family members from the cradle. During the closure of educational institutions, they are captive at home and read their textbooks more or less. For the most part, they had to work more than normal situations and domestic violence increased against them. MJF argued that 456 female children were raped in 27 districts of Bangladesh in lockdown [7]. As well as,

although male members of the family were able to go out somewhere, the female did not go out and meet with friends and relatives in no case, signaling a captive life.

Since the authority closed educational institutions in consideration of the situation of the students, parents arranged immediately the marriage of their daughters, particularly in rural Bangladesh [8]. In fact, most rural parents want to make their daughters study just for coming marriage invitation from rich bridegrooms for their daughters. Unfortunately, lockdown did not give the chance to continue their studying and most of the parents did not wait to arrange marriage. For this reason, the premature pregnancy rate also was raised during the lockdown in Bangladesh [8].

Moreover, the lockdown has far-reaching impacts to continue the study of girls in the future. It is the main reason that lockdown rose economic stress in plenty in the family which will prevent adolescent girls to go to school and Colleges in the future [9]. The matter of horrifying that a few adolescent girls were raped during the lockdown. MJF stated that 35 female children were raped in 27 districts of Bangladesh [7]. In this case, family members and relatives are more responsible in all probability because most of the girls stayed at home.

B. Housewives:

As a rule, after married to a girl, she becomes a wife and works different domestic tasks generally at home. Of course, a woman spends 6.3 hours per day as household tasks in Bangladesh as a housewife [8]. Since every family member was at home during the national closure, the number of tasks increased in the family what housewives had to do point-blank. For example, 91% of females had to commit excess domestic and care works during COVID-19 [9]. On the contrary, by losing the

income sources for COVID-19, men felt anxiety, fear, stress, and even someone used alcohol which raised domestic violence against women in the family [10]. MJF argued that 4,249 females are victimized by domestic violence enormously during COVID-19 in 27 districts [7]. In addition, women faced unintended pregnancies during the lockdown. A recent report showed that 56% of females are prevented from contraceptives; 63% faced scarcity of contraceptives materials; and 53% of respondents argued that the price of contraceptives materials was raised for lockdown [9]. Then, pregnant females were at the point of many challenges because of the scarcity of nutritious food and raising domestic violence. For example, 68% of pregnant did not get sufficient nutritious food during the lockdown in Bangladesh [9].

On the other hand, national lockdown pushed the couple stayed at home for many days at a stretch which made conflict among them ostensibly. Because they were deprived of many opportunities, such as- visiting at the parks; eating at the restaurant; meeting with friends; etc. which raised the divorce rate among couples as a result [10]. Most importantly, housewives in poor families faced hard challenges to feed the family members in the period of closure [11]. Though earning sources were shut down for stabilizing human beings; eating of the meals was not stopped in general at any cost. So, these housewives had to manage daily meals for their families at all hazards. It is a matter of concern that assaults against women were not stopped during COVID-19 totally. Because MJF stated that 4 women were raped and 20 women are subjected to other types of assaults in 27 districts [7].

C. Female jobholders:

It goes without saying that after married; all women don't take the tasks of housewives as

their professions. Rather a large number of women are job-holders in different types of workplaces- from cleaner to secretariats. A report indicated at a glance that there are 60 million workforces in Bangladesh where 18.9 million are female [8]. During the lockdown, females in lower-class jobs were beset with various problems. By losing their income, they didn't manage their family expenditures body and soul. Especially garments workers were at stake situation by not getting dues and salaries. Although the Bangladesh government declared BDTK 5000 crore as a stimulus package for garments workers, the authority did not give them the money [8]. On the other hand, the number of females is more in the health and social sectors than male by all means. For instance, it is reported that 70% of health and social workers are female in the world [12]. Thus, it is admitted on all hands that most of the nurses are female in Bangladesh who served the COVID-19 infected patients on principle and become infected on and on as a consequence [13].

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

We can't remove in a matter of years the violence against women, let alone it would not during COVID-19. It is very disappointing to learn that lockdown increased the number of tasks at home. Beside limited health care facilities are affecting women generally. There are important matters of concerning that the pressures on women which need to be addressed with emergency. In the situation of lockdown for COVID-19, most of the family lost their running income sources countrywide. Instead of thinking about this issue, breadwinner put their anxiety and fear of crisis on women. The central reason for raising domestic violence is staying at home for many days. But whether this means that all men don't exploit their wives. I think the leading factor is lack of awareness and motivating information

regarding COVID-19. We can't deny the condition of female earners whose income sources were going into grave danger. In many spheres, they passed a hard time tackling family expenses. If they got their money from the stimulus package at due time, they can be benefited. It is not just older women who were affected due to COVID-19; adolescent girls also were affected after the other. Because premature marriage and pregnancy increased in many places in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION:

It is clear that women are victimized on a large scale on different sides of their life during the lockdown. In this case, the husbands have out and away responsibilities to control their anxiety at all events, and cope up with the environment; signaling to reduce domestic violence. On the other hand, wives should convince their family members at a pinch to cope up with the situations. So, everyone has to duty to solve one's problem and hope that situations will be normal soon by the invention of vaccines and awareness of the public. At the eleventh hour, the authority should provide sufficient mental supports except the fear of COVID-19 among general people so that they can be far away from the violence against women.

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