



# TRUST, INSTITUTIONS, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

How are Communities Responding to  
COVID-19 in Bangladesh?

22 APRIL, 2020 | 6:00 PM BST



# Background & aims

Successful responses to COVID-19 depend on citizens trusting & cooperating with authorities

Study aimed to inform Government & partners how policies & communications are being received & acted on

# Research team

**Tariq Omar Ali (Georgetown University)**

**Mirza Hassan (BIGD)**

**Naomi Hossain (Accountability Research Center,  
American University)**

**Md. Mahan Ul Hoque (BIGD)**

**Md. Mamun-Ur-Rashid (DRI)**

**Imran Matin (BIGD)**

**Mehnaz Rabbani (BIGD)**

**Interviews conducted by DRI team**

**Raju Ahammed, Md. Akteruzzaman, Ashraful Alam,  
Kamrul Hasan, Razib Hasan, Tanvir Hassan, Zabir  
Hossain, Shameem Reza Khan, Nadia Binta Mahfuz,  
Md. Moniruzzaman, & Dipanjan Sidhanta**





# Methods



- ❑ Case studies of community dynamics of COVID response
- ❑ 20 sites selected to cover range of community types & COVID impact
- ❑ 60 min semi-structured checklist
- ❑ 123 key informants from different occupations / social groups
- ❑ Previously researched areas / informants; selected by snowball
- ❑ Telephone interviews from 5-13 April 2020

# Experiences of the lockdown

The lockdown is accepted as necessary –  
fear is widespread

⑩ Particularly after early April reports of  
COVID deaths in Bangladesh

But not everyone is adhering to the  
lockdown

- ⑩ Some people lack awareness (fewer now)
- ⑩ Fatalism or faith in God as protection
- ⑩ Young men get bored
- ⑩ People go out to look for work
- ⑩ People go out to look for help

# Experiences of the lockdown

Patrolling by police and army mostly welcomed

Local authorities & officials working hard in most places, often with community leaders, to enforce lockdown

Strong consensus that the lockdown will not hold if people cannot eat

# Community needs

- ❑ Healthcare is being adversely affected
- ❑ Most people cannot work and those reliant on daily earnings have seen dramatic income declines

## Community needs

- People dependent on daily wages have already cut spending & food consumption
- Very little assistance received to date
- People on low incomes will need to depend on Government assistance



# Institutions, actors, trust



Local governments making serious efforts to protect citizens

Local community leaders / members mostly cooperating

NGOs have visibly done little to date

Private charitable initiatives noticeable

Local community based-organizations (CBOs) active

Religious actors played mixed role

# Institutions, actors, trust

- ❑ People's hopes for surviving COVID-19 rest on promise of Government relief
- ❑ Many losing trust in Government because of delayed assistance & confusion
  - ❑ Information about Government assistance is limited
- ❑ Many people do not trust all official information (excluding IEDCR)
- ❑ People rely on private television news & (to a lesser extent) Facebook for information



# Implications

- People responding positively to lockdown
- messages work best when reinforced independently from multiple sources
- People are relying on Government assistance: lockdown success & trust in Government policies depends on
  - clear information
  - immediate relief
- distributed accountably, with wide social involvement
- Frontline health service provision is under significant pressure
- Punitive measures must be stopped & perpetrators held to account



# Further information

For more information about BIGD COVID response research:

<https://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/all-projects/rapid-research-response-to-covid19/about/>

For more information about the Trust, Institutions & Collective Action project please contact: [mahan@bracu.ac.bd](mailto:mahan@bracu.ac.bd) or [hossain@american.edu](mailto:hossain@american.edu)



BRAC  
INSTITUTE OF  
GOVERNANCE &  
DEVELOPMENT



**DEVELOPMENT**  
Research Initiative

