# Research Project Summary

## Has the COVID-19 pandemic worsened multidimensional poverty and vulnerability? Evidence from a unique national longitudinal household survey dataset in Bangladesh

**Project lead**

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**Key personnel**

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**Expected project outcome**

This is the first study to estimate the effect of various types of social protection policies to mitigate the negative welfare effects of the COVID-19 pandemic using a nationwide panel. The evidence will help to identify the determinants of poverty among 'the new class of poor' (including returnee migrants, workers in the informal sector), and will not be limited to aggregate nationwide measures of poverty.

**Setting the scene**

Poverty is understood to include not only monetary dimensions, such as household consumption, but also non-monetary dimensions, such as education and health. We will measure individual outcomes and construct multi-dimensional poverty indices to assess poverty in a comprehensive way.

We will pay special attention to "the new poor", for example returnee migrants who lost work overseas during the pandemic, workers in the informal sector, and households in remote areas with poor access to the internet and therefore limited access to schooling during the pandemic.'

**Methodological approach**

- Define poverty and vulnerability
- Construct a Global Multidimensional Poverty Index
- Compute measures of subjective well-being

- Employ econometric methods to estimate the effects on different poverty measures

**Research activities**

Data collection
In 2018, Prof Raihan (co-lead) conducted a nationally representative household survey of 10,500 households in 500 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) in all 64 districts of Bangladesh. In November 2020, SR and MU organised a phone survey with shorter questionnaires to evaluate the short-term effect of the pandemic. The survey reached 5,577 households out of 10,500.

We plan to revisit 286 PSUs from 33 randomly selected districts, using a stratified design to ensure that the selection is nationally representative.
We intend to contact 6,006 households (i.e. 57% of the original 10,500) so as to ensure a sample comprising at least 50% of the original households, even with a 10% non-response rate1. Comparison of the existing data for 2020 and 2018 will enable us to identify the short-term impact of the pandemic, while comparison of the new data with the 2018 data will enable us to identify the medium-term impact.

**Stakeholder engagement activities**

Our research activities incorporate a policy engagement strategy with an equally prioritized "insider" / "outsider" approach. In the case of advocacy strategies based on consensus, the role of "insiders" with access to resources and power (e.g. politicians or policymakers in Government who proactively persuade causes, usually overlaps with that of the "outsiders" (broadly defined to include community leaders, citizens or those working in small NGOs, who have little power to influence policymaking directly).

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to reach outsider groups including teachers at schools and madrasas, local Union Parishad members, local entrepreneurs, and representatives of local civil society organisations and NGOs.
- Key Informant Interviews, hybrid workshops and informal online meetings with government officials, local representatives, relevant experts / academics, and civil society organisations
- Dissemination events, blogs and social media

Proposed outputs include:

- 3 x Technical Working Papers (GDI and SANEM series)
- 3 x Policy Briefings
- Non-technical report
- Hybrid workshops
- Press release

**Primary CLEAR theme:** Poverty and vulnerability

**Secondary CLEAR themes**: service delivery, accountability and governance