

Brief Report on Food Support in Ramadan



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Background:

Rangpur division is the poorest and most food-insecure region in Bangladesh. According to the latest poverty map¹, the poverty rate in this division is 47.23% whereas the average poverty rate in Bangladesh is 24.3% (page # 20). A study 'Multi-Sectoral Anticipatory Impact Analysis and Needs Assessment' conducted by Needs Assessment Working Group (NAWG), Bangladesh reports that Rangpur division has the highest number of extreme poor population. The NAWG report has identified top ten priority districts based on five key composite indicators (including risk of exposure to COVID-19, demographic and social vulnerability, economic and physical capital, and historical disaster vulnerability) which includes Gaibandha and Kurigram districts as well².



The less level of economic development except agriculture, widespread temporary unemployment and underemployment, very low wages and lack of skills and inputs contribute to the region's continuing deprivation. No remarkable industries has been established in this region. Natural disasters put huge pressure on the livelihood. Generally, the people living in these areas have to struggle with poverty and natural disasters. Agriculture based economy cannot ensure working opportunity for the large number of landless day laborers round the year and there is no alternative to engage with other economic activities. Landless day laborers do not have any other option than selling their labor in advance at that time. Even they sell their domestic livestock, poultry and household belongings in low price. During COVID-19 pandemic, a large number of poor people lost their works and poverty rate significantly increased. A study conducted by BRAC stated that the low-income people were suffering great losses in their earnings due to the enforcement of social distancing measures and the countrywide lockdowns that hiked the percentage of people living in extreme poverty to 60 percent³.



On the other hand, the global economic crisis brought new challenges especially for the poor community. Consequently, the dependent people e.g. elderly, widow, divorcee persons with disabilities, orphans have been most sufferer. Male members of many families go to Dhaka and other district in search of work keeping their wives and children at home. Sometimes, they get married again in those areas and do not come back home. Then their wives and children fall into big uncertainty. Sometimes, those wives later live in their parent's house with children. As their parents are poor as well, so they cannot manage additional expenditure. So, in many cases these children are sent to the



¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JFv1izzFRjjiYSa_c3DB-UauDM58zLh/view?usp=sharing

² file:///C:/Users/Deel/Downloads/covid_nawg_anticipatory_impacts_and_needs_analysis.pdf

³ <https://www.brac.net/program/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Rapid-Perception-Survey-On-COVID19-Awareness-and-Economic-Impact.pdf>

Orphanage where they live with many difficulties. Even they cannot have nutritious food especially during Ramadan and do not get new dress on Eid day. They cannot enjoy the Eid festival. On the other hand, generally the price of daily essential commodities goes up in the month of Ramadan that creates difficulties for the targeted people in managing necessary food.

Introduction

Considering the helplessness of the destitute poor people particularly in the month of Ramadan, GUK started to provide Iftar and Dinner to orphans, extremely poor, elderly, widow, persons with disabilities throughout the month of Ramadan. The organisation also distributed Saree, Lungi/Panjabi, Semai, Sugar, Milk among these people as Eid gifts.



Process for this Initiative

We followed the below process to carry out this activity.

1. Support to Orphanages

Firstly, we identified Orphanage in the target locations to provide this support. After selection of the Orphanages, we arranged food items for the whole month of Ramadan. We handed over the food items to the Orphanage authority/management committee to provide Iftar and cooked food to Orphans. GUK staff members closely monitored the whole process of providing Iftar and dinner. On the last day of Ramadan, we distributed new dresses to the Orphans.



2. Arranged Iftar and Dinner for Poor People

We prepared primary list of targeted people e.g. orphans, extremely poor, elderly, widow, persons with disabilities. Then, GUK monitoring team validated the list by visiting door to door household visit. After finalizing the beneficiary list, we distributed token to the selected persons. We decorated a place with sitting arrangement where the selected persons used to come daily with the token and take Iftar and dinner throughout the month of Ramadan. On the last day of Ramadan, we distributed Eid gifts (Saree, Lungi/Panjabi, Semai, Sugar, Milk) to those people.

