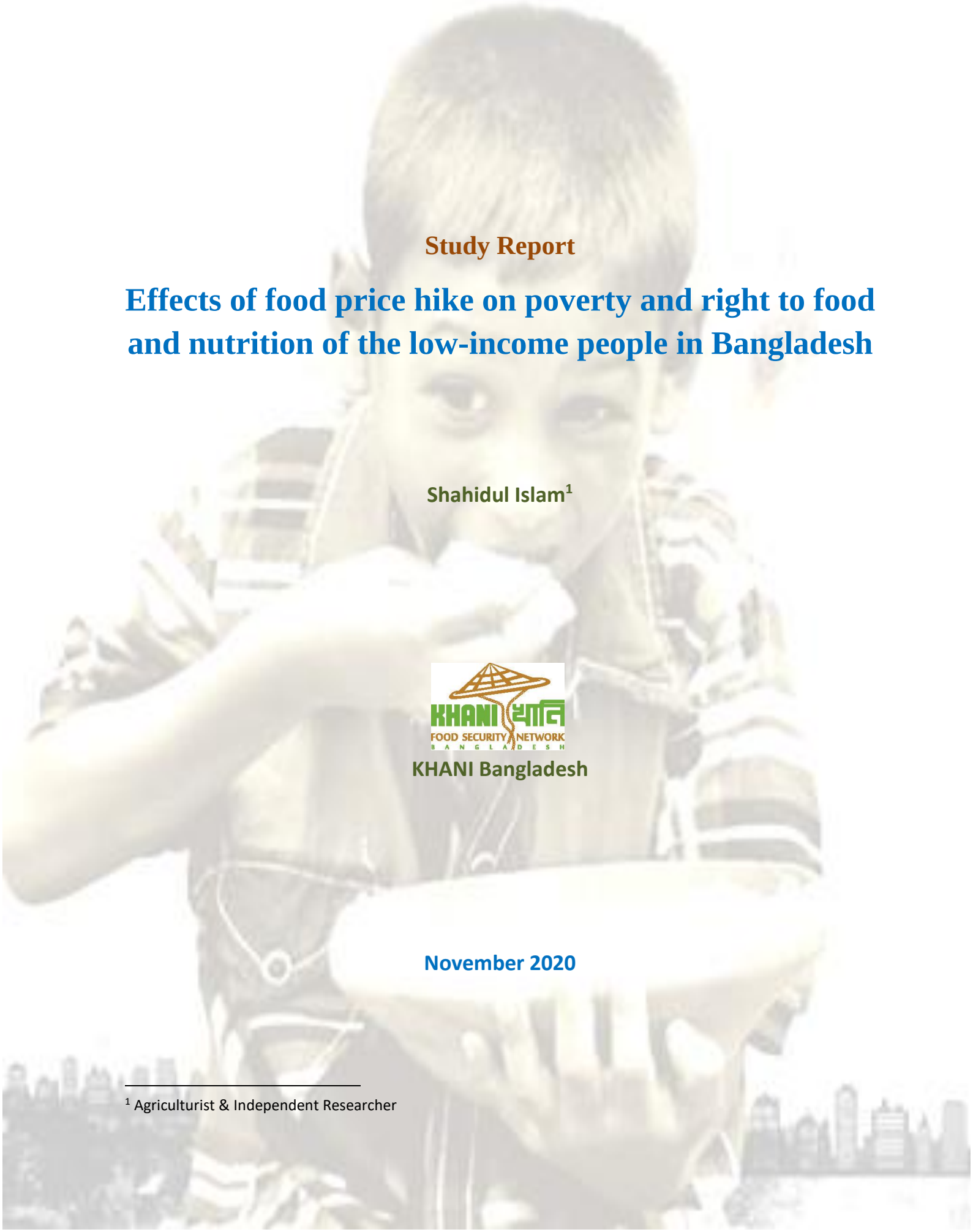


Study Report

Effects of food price hike on poverty and right to food and nutrition of the low-income people in Bangladesh

Shahidul Islam[1]

KHANI Bangladesh

November 2020

[1] Agriculturist & Independent Researcher

Abbreviations

BBS = Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT = Bangladeshi Taka
BER = Bangladesh Economic Review
BRAC = Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CEDAW = The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COVID-19 = Corona Virus Disease 2019
CRC = Convention on the Rights of the Child
DAE = Department of Agriculture Extension
DAM = Department of Agriculture Marketing
FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization
FIES = Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FY = Fiscal Year
GED = General Economic Division
GFSI = Global Food Security Index
HIES = Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HYV = High Yielding Variety
ICESCR = International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
IFAD = International Fund for Agricultural Development
mmt = million metric ton
MoA = Ministry of Agriculture
MoC = Ministry of Commerce
MoF = Ministry of Food
MoFL = Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
OMS = Open Market Sales
RAI = Responsible Investment in Agriculture
RtFG = Right to Food guideline
RTFN = Right to Food and Nutrition
SDG = Sustainable Development Goal
TCB = Trading Corporation of Bangladesh
UN = United Nations
UNHRC= United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF = United Nation International Children Emergency Fund
UPR = Universal Periodic Review
USA = United States of America
VGGT= Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests
WB = World Bank
WFP = World Food Programme

Contents

List of Figures & Tables 4
1. Executive Summary 5
2. Objectives of the Study 6
3. Introduction 7
4. Methodology of the Study..... 8
5. Key Findings of the Survey 9
5.1 Occupational status of the respondents 9
5.2 Income status of the HH 9
5.3 Food purchasing power 10
5.4 HH level food expenditure 11
5.5 Food security situation of the HH 16
5.6 Access to OMS 17
5.7 Responsibility of the Government 18
6. Food Security Situation in Bangladesh 19
7. Food Price Hike and Food Security 20
7.1 Pillar-1: Food Availability 20
7.2 Pillar-2: Food Accessibility 22
7.3 Pillar-3: Food Utilization 23
7.4 Pillar-4: Food Stability 23
8. Recent Price Hike in Bangladesh 24
9. The Causes of Food Price Hike 26
10. Effects of Food Price Hike 27
11. Emerging Challenges in Ensuring RTFN 29
12. Conclusions 29
13. Recommendations 30

List of Figures & Tables

Figures:

Figure 1: Gender segregation of the respondents 8
Figure 2: The number of respondents against their occupation 9
Figure 3: The monthly household income of the respondents before and during outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic in March 2020. 10
Figure 4: The % of respondents regarding the prices of essential food items which are beyond their purchasing power 11
Figure 5: Status of household food expenditure of the respondents 11
Figure 6: Share of income spent to purchase food by the respondents' household during price hike 12
Figure 7: Increase in household food cost during last one month, October 2020 13
Figure 8: % of respondents according to the food purchase during price hike 13
Figure 9: % reduction of food cost due to price hike 14
Figure 10: % of respondents cut expenditures of other basic needs due to price hike 15
Figure 11: % of respondent cutting the basic need due to price hike 15
Figure 12: Status of borrowing money of the respondents 16
Figure 13: The status of number of meal taken per day by the respondents 16
Figure 14: Status of food accessibility of the respondents 17
Figure 15: The foodstuffs purchased by the respondents from OMS 17
Figure 16: Respondents' opinion regarding reasons for not buying from OMS 18
Figure 17: Respondents' opinion regarding responsibility of government in ensuring food for the poor citizens 19
Figure 18: Changes in prices of Aman-HYV-Coarse rice during 2015-2020 24
Figure 19: Monthly increase of the price of onion (local) in 2019 25

Table:

Table-1: Food grain production & requirement in Bangladesh 21

1. Executive Summary

A continuous, unprecedented and excessive rise in the price level of essential food stuffs is highly detrimental especially to the low-income[2] poor people for their socio-economic interest, both in terms of current wellbeing and future economic development. The real disposable personal income of the poor household and consequently their spending capacity are significantly affected by the shock of price hike.

The present study was undertaken to understand the effects of price hike on 'RTFN' of the low-income people of Bangladesh as well as reveal the root causes of such price hike and find out the possible solutions

Total 438 poor people of 24 low-income professional groups from 19 districts of Bangladesh were randomly interviewed by using the Survey Monkey Tool to collect primary data for this study. The secondary data were analysed and a good number of literatures were reviewed for understanding the trend, root causes and solution of the problem of price hike.

The overall family income of the respondents ranged between <3,000BDT to >BDT10,000 which is much below the national per capita average income(BDT 15,988; HIES, 2016) in the era when Bangladesh has already entered into the club of middle-income country club. Before start of the economic shock caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 in Bangladesh in late March 2020 only 4% of the respondents had a monthly family income >3,000BDT while 27% of the respondents' family income were >10,000BDT. The family income of rest of the respondents (69%) were ranged between BDT3,000-10,000.

The respondents of the study noticed that the prices of almost all of the major food items went beyond their purchasing power since middle of the year 2020 when the economic shock of COVID-19 also caused drastic reduction of their income. In such a situation only 5% of the respondents could manage to purchase the same amount food that they could purchase before the price hike while rest 95% of the respondents had to purchase little less (32%) and much less (63%) amount compared to the normal price situation.

About 99% of the respondent opined that they had to cut expenditures for other basic needs either often (65%) or sometimes (34%) due to the price hike. Most of the household had to adjust their increased food cost by cutting cost of other basic needs such as clothing (77%), treatment cost (56%), education cost (40%) and other cost (73%).

In order to meet the extra expenditures for food due to price hike the households have often to take loan from microcredit NGOs or local money lenders with high rate of interest. It was

[2] **Low-income group:** The people having the monthly HH income lower than the national average HH income of BDT15,988 according to HIES, 2016 has been considered as low-income group for the study. The people who are mainly lives from hand to mouth, marginal farmers, low-paid labour, daily wage earners, floating people who earn from doing small business on the street, maid servant etc. especially living in the urban slums being migrated from the rural areas are considered as low-income group for the study.

found from the survey that 52% of the households had to take loan during last month may be due to price hike. The average amount of loan was BDT22,076 that ranged between BDT3,500-50,000. Thus the food price hike throws the poor people under huge burden of debt.

About 93% of the respondents said that they could take three meals a day before the price hike which is reduced to 60% due to price hike. On the contrary, before the price hike only 5% of the respondents used to take two meals a day which was increased to 40% due to the price hike. About 35% of the respondents had to spend a day without any food sometimes while 20% of the respondents said that often they had to spend a day with an empty stomach that indicates their worse situation of accessibility to food.

As per the analysis in this study, major causes for the of unprecedented price hike in Bangladesh are unpredictable production loss due to the natural disasters; creation of artificial supply scarcity by the traders; the failure of market regulatory bodies due to lack of enough capacity & policy instruments, corruption or other vested interest; lack of authentic demand and supply data to prepare appropriate production and import plan; panic purchase by the consumers etc.

Formation of price commission, strengthening the capacity of TCB, Efficient supply management by managing domestic production and import and strengthening coordination mechanism among the relevant government institutions are necessary for keeping the prices stable while rationing of essential food stuff for the poor could be a good option to increase access to food for the poor not only for the price hike period but also ensuring the realization of their RTFN sustainably.

But, it is interesting to note that though too small but still 2% of the respondents opined that there is no responsibility of the government in combating food scarcity and price hike while 19% of the respondents do not know whether the government has any role to play though the government is constitutionally responsible for ensuring the food for all as basic need of every citizen. Therefore, the government seems to handle such a crucial issue of price hike in a very much relax mode as there is no legal obligation in absence of a right to food law in Bangladesh to respect, protect and fulfill such an important basic human rights of the people in general and poor & hungry people in particular.

2. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study can be defined as following in broader aspect-

- To analyze the immediate impacts of food price hike on food and nutrition security of the low-income group of Bangladesh.
- To provide recommendations to the Governments to ensure food and nutrition security and share the same with civil society institutions.

3. Introduction

The right to food and nutrition (hereafter RTFN) is a basic human right which is recognized in an array of several international human rights instruments, e.g. Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12 and 14 of the CEDAW, as well as Article 24 and 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Bangladesh has ratified all these instruments and the government of Bangladesh is thus obliged under international law to respect, protect, and fulfill the RTFN. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, global leaders have committed to the goal of achieving zero hunger by 2030.

Food price hike drastically retard the rapid achievements in poverty alleviation and reducing hunger. A continuous, unprecedented and excessive rise in the price level of essential food stuffs is highly detrimental especially to the low-income poor people for their socio-economic interest, both in terms of current wellbeing and future economic development. The real disposable personal income of the poor household and consequently their spending capacity are significantly affected by the shock of price hike.

It is a matter of great concern that cost of food crop production is being increased day by day resulting in either increase in food cost for the consumers or decreasing profit margin for the producers that is a great threat for the sustainability of the food production and the stability pillar of the food security. It will definitely hamper the achievement of other pillars like availability & accessibility as well.

Bangladesh is a country which is hit by various kinds of natural and man-made disasters almost every year. In 2020, the country has already experienced three big such disasters namely COVID-19 pandemic, Cyclone Amphan and Severe Flood one after another. The disasters have severely affected the life and livelihood of the poor people resulting in drastic decrease in the level of income that has made their life and food security situation perhaps the worst of the recent times. In such a situation, food price hike has emerged as a new disaster for the country especially for the poor people. The poor people of the country are ruined by the natural and manmade disasters one after another where price hike perhaps the most vital one that severely affects the 'RTFN' of the poor people.

This quick study has conducted in order to figure out the causes, impacts and the possible solutions of price hike in Bangladesh in order to way out how to reduce the sufferings of the poor people and improving their food security situation with a view to drawing the attention of the state machinery in realizing the necessity of a legal framework for respecting, protecting and fulfilling the 'RTFN' of poor people of Bangladesh.

4. Methodology of the Study

A quick survey was conducted by using the "Survey Monkey" tool as well as secondary data were collected and a good number of literatures were reviewed for collecting necessary data and information for the study.

Total 428 respondents from 19 districts of Bangladesh, almost equal number from each district, were interviewed by the volunteer interviewer to fill up the questionnaire at survey monkey tool. Among the respondent 82% were male and 18% were female (Figure-1). The low percentage of women respondents indicates the dominance of males in low-income working class while the women are mainly engaged in the professions like maidservant or unpaid household works. Because, in Bangladesh context, women are mainly subordinate to man in the HH doing mainly unpaid households works or engaged in few special professions like garments workers. The man or women engaged in institutional labour were not considered for the study, rather, the daily wage earners were mainly considered.

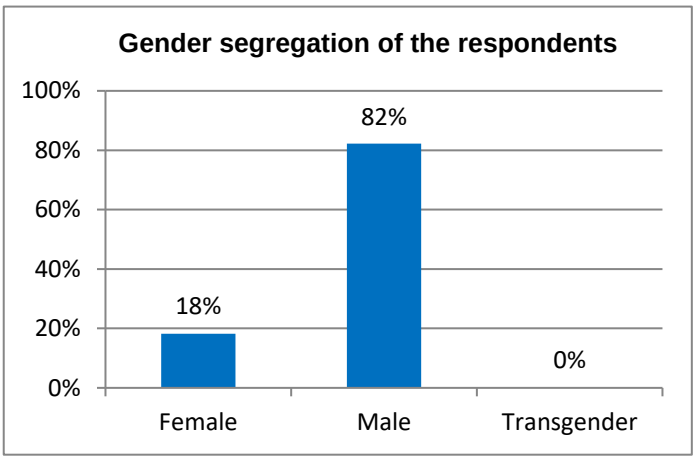


Figure 1: Gender segregation of the respondents

The respondents were selected randomly considering their professions representing 24 professional groups which are well-known to be low-income group because their monthly HH income are much below to the national average HH income of BDT 15,988 (HIES, 2016). The respondents were categorized as extremely-low-income (>Tk.3,000) low-income (>Tk.3,001-5,000), lower-middle-income (Tk.5,001-7,000), upper-middle-income (>Tk.7,001-10,000) upper-income (>Tk.10,000). The districts covered by the study were Dhaka, Khulna, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah, Magura, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Chattagram, Khagrachari, Bandarban, Noakhali, Barishal, Pirojpur, Barguna, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Sunamganj covering all 8 administrative divisions of Bangladesh. In order to getting the target respondents the data were collected mainly from urban areas while the farmer and agricultural labours were interviewed at rural level.

Data also collected & analysed from the secondary sources in order to know the food availability, accessibility, utilization and stability situation in line with the aspects of RTFN while a good number of literatures were reviewed to understand the dynamics of food price hike, the root causes as well as to way out for the possible solutions to recommend to the state for their progressive realization of RTFN of the poor people of Bangladesh in absence of a Right to Food law in the country.

3. Key Findings of the Survey

5.1 Occupation Status of the Respondents:

As mentioned in the methodology the survey respondents were selected randomly considering their low-income occupations as presented in figure-2 below.

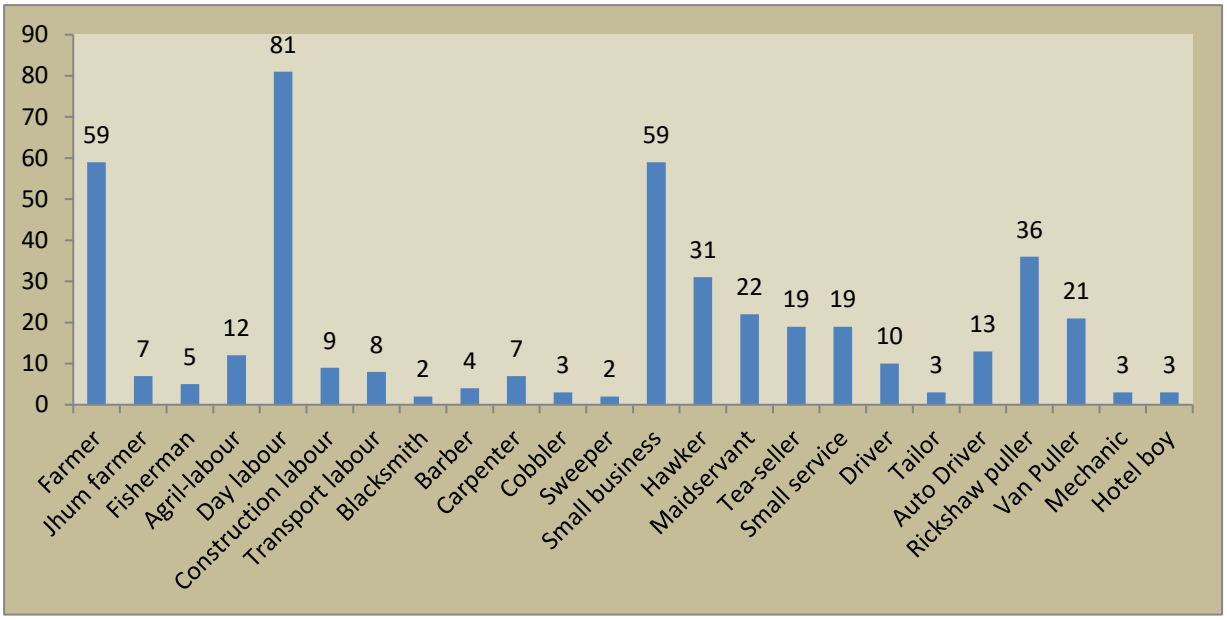


Figure 2: The number of respondents against their occupation

The occupations of the respondents where dominated by the farmer, day labour, the small businessmen and rickshaw pullers as because they are the absolute majority among the low-income groups. The other professions were Jhum farmer, Fisherman, Agricultural labour, Construction labour, Transport labour, Blacksmith, Barber, Carpenter, Cobbler, Sweeper, Hawker, Maid servant, Tea-seller, Small service, Driver, Tailor, Auto Driver, Rickshaw puller, Van puller, Mechanic and Hotel boy etc.

5.2 Income Status

As mentioned in the methodology, the survey respondents were selected from the low-income groups comprised of 19 respondents from extremely-low-income (>Tk.3,000) group, 78 from low-income (>Tk.3,001-5,000) group, 108 from lower-middle-income (Tk.5,001-7,000) group, 114 from upper-middle-income (>Tk.7,001-10,000) group and 119 from upper-income (>Tk.10,000). The overall family income of the respondents ranged between <3,000BDT to >BDT10,000 which is much below the national per capita average income(BDT 15,988; HIES, 2016) in the era when Bangladesh has already entered into the club of middle-income country club. The figure-3 shows that before start of the economic shock caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 in Bangladesh in late March 2020 only 4% of the respondents had a monthly family income >3,000BDT while 27% of the respondents' family income were >10,000BDT. The family income of rest of the respondents (69%) were ranged between BDT3,000-10,000.

It is apparent from the survey data presented in the figure that the income level of the participants is usually very low that has drastically been declined due to the economic shock

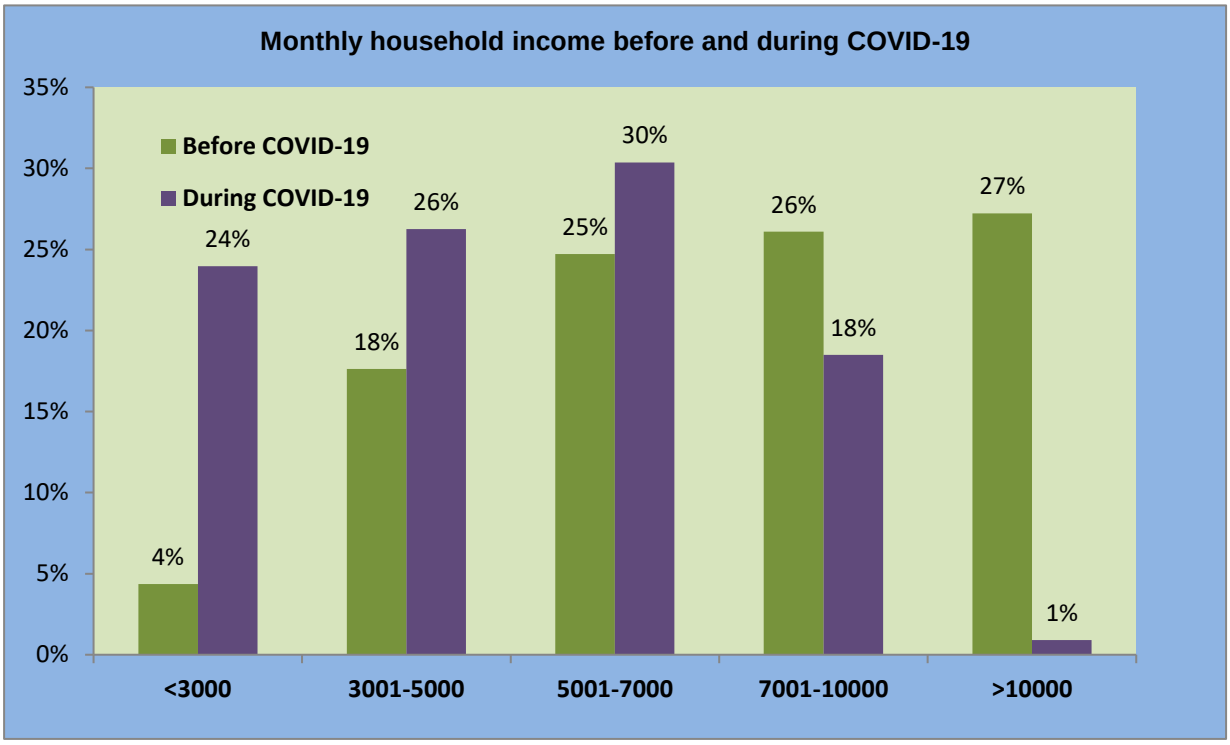


Figure 3: The monthly household income of the respondents before and during outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic in March 2020.

of COVID-19 pandemic. Before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic only 4% of the respondents had a monthly income <BDT3000 which has been increased to 24% due to the economic shock of the pandemic. On the other hand 27% of the respondents had a monthly income >BDT10,000 which is also reduced to 1% due to the same reason. The reduction in income level clearly indicates their reduced purchasing power of essential food items to meet their dietary need.

5.3 Food Purchasing Power

The information presented in the figure-4, shows that almost all of the respondents opined that the price of the essential food items like rice, dal, onion, potato, vegetables and also the other food items have gone beyond their purchasing power during last few months since July 2020.

Among the respondents more than 80% opined that the prices of Rice (86%), Onion (94%), Potato (91%) and vegetables (81%) went beyond their purchasing capacity during last three months while more than 50% of the respondents had an opinion that the prices of Dal (62%) such as Lentil, Mungbean etc. and other food items (55%) such as fish, meat, egg, milk, which are the major sources of protein for the poor people, were too high to afford by them. It needs to mention here that the prices of broiler chicken, commercially produced fishes namely Pangas, Telapia etc. went much down since the lockdown of COVID-19 in March 2020

may be because of the diminishing purchasing power of the poor people or disruption of supply chain.

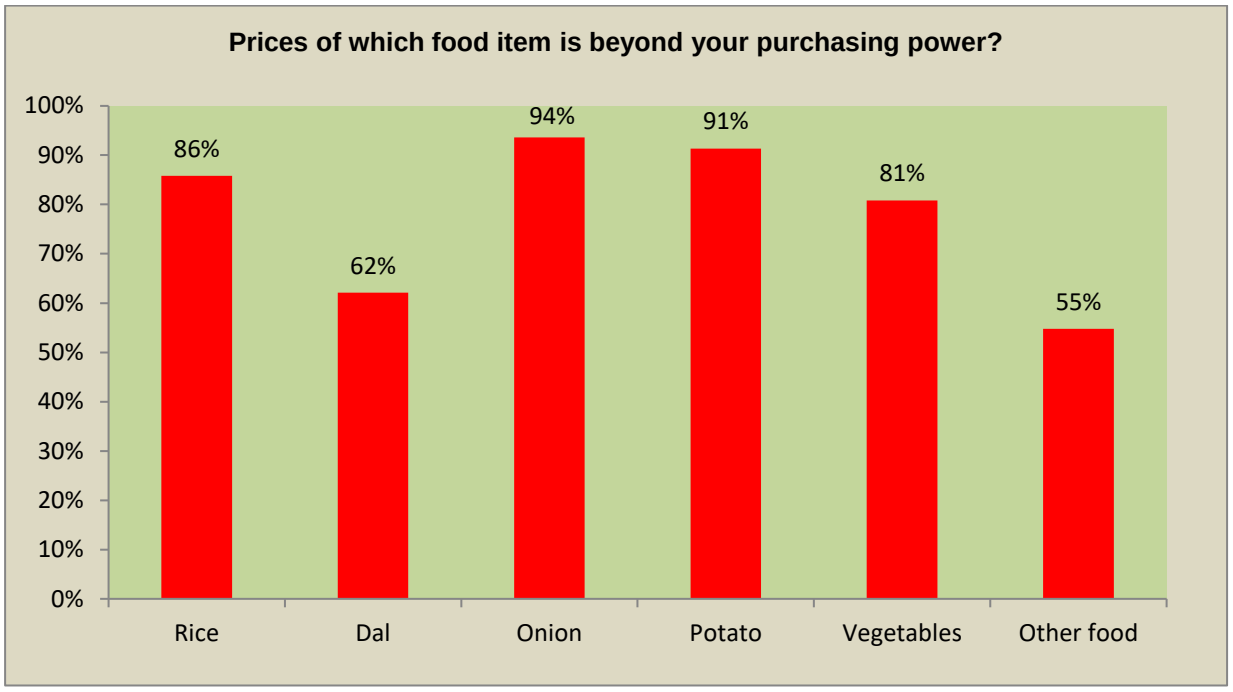


Figure 4: The % of respondents regarding the prices of essential food items which are beyond their purchasing power.

5.4. Household Level Food Expenditure situation

The household expenditure for purchasing foodstuff of the respondents of the survey is presented in figure-5. The figure shows that the highest 31% of the respondents had to spend

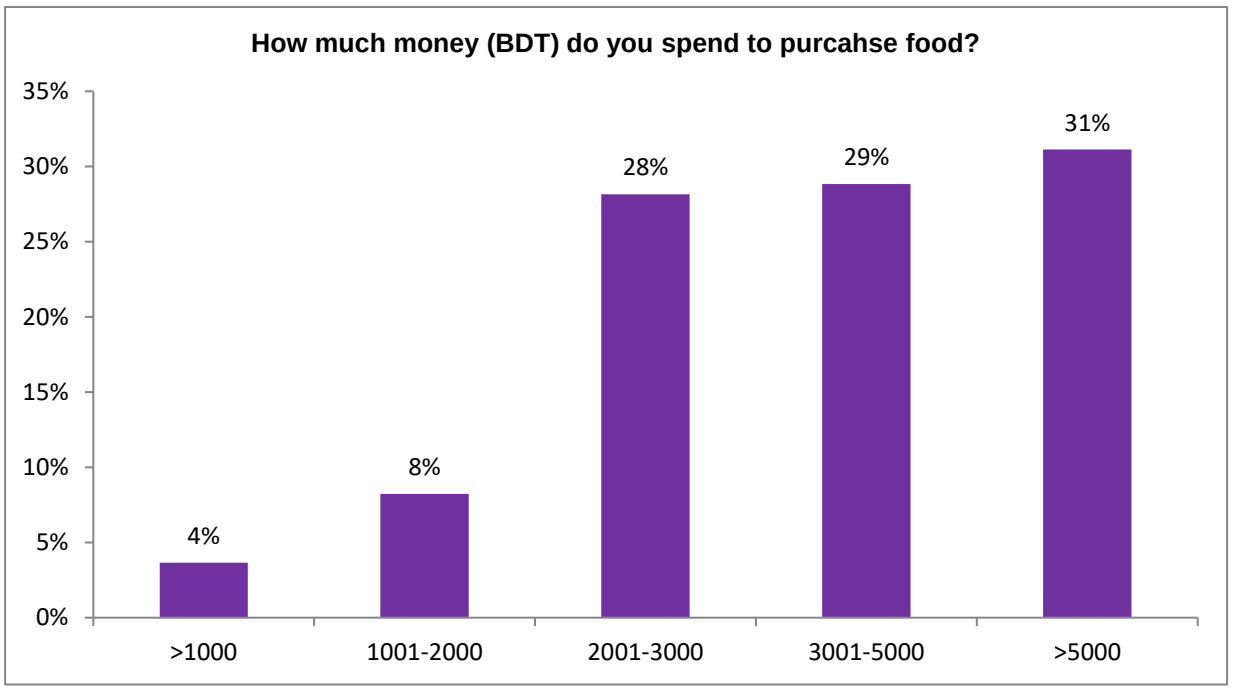


Figure 5: Status of household food expenditure of the respondents.

more that BDT 5,000 for purchase of foodstuff while 29% and 28% of the respondent had to spend BDT 3001-5000 and BDT2001-3000 respectively while the present income status of the respondents as presented in figure-2 shows that monthly household income of 50% household is less than BDT5000 while the income of rest of the respondents ranged between the BDT5,000-10,000.

Therefore, taking the average income BDT5,000 and the average expenditure as BDT3,500 it can be said that the average family expenditure for food is approximately 70% of their monthly income while according to the HIES, 2016 about 60% of the household income is spent for the purchase of foodstuff.

The percentage of share of income spent for food purchase during price hike is presented in figure-6. The figure shows 38% of the respondents' families had to spend more than 60% of their household income for foodstuff purchase while 11%, 16%, 15%, 13% and 7% of the respondents' families opined that they had to spend 51-60%, 41-50%, 31-40%, 20-30% and <20% of their household income respectively.

It is therefore evident that a lion share of the income of the respondent had to spend for purchasing food staff which limit their expenditure for other basic human needs like clothing, health-water-sanitation, education, shelter and let alone the other basic human rights i.e. recreation.

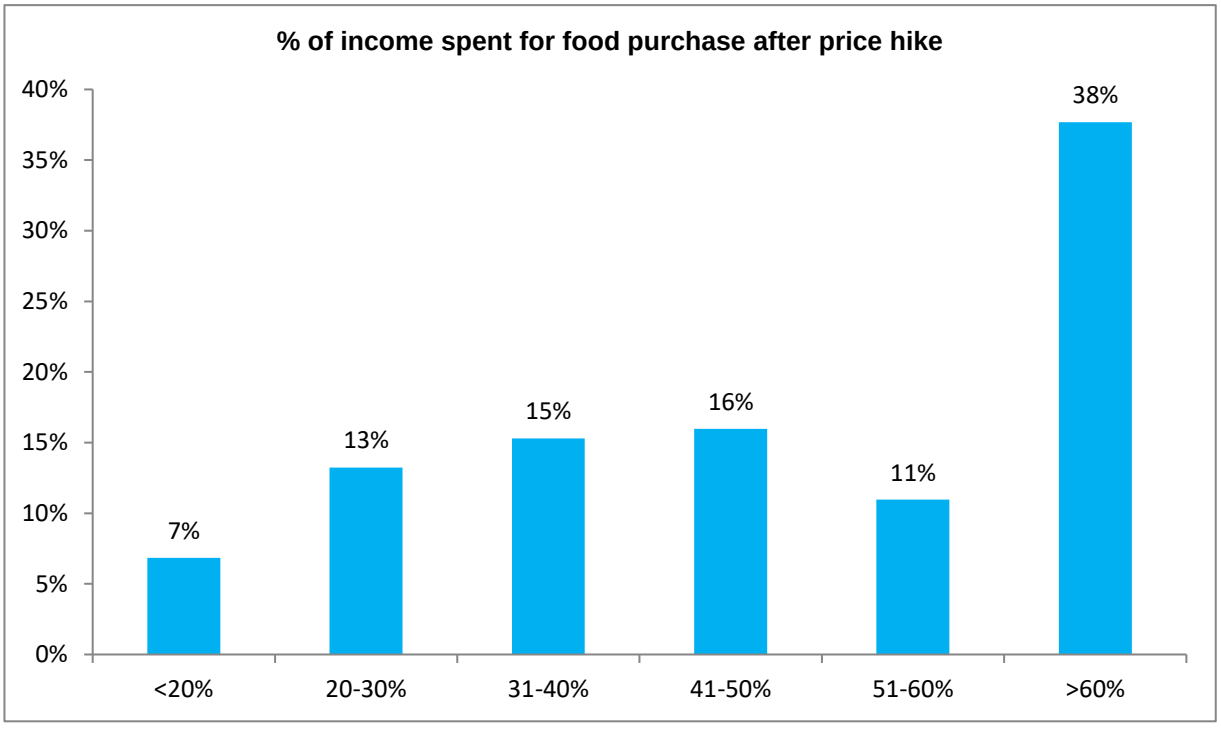


Figure 6: Share of income spent to purchase food by the respondents' household during price hike.

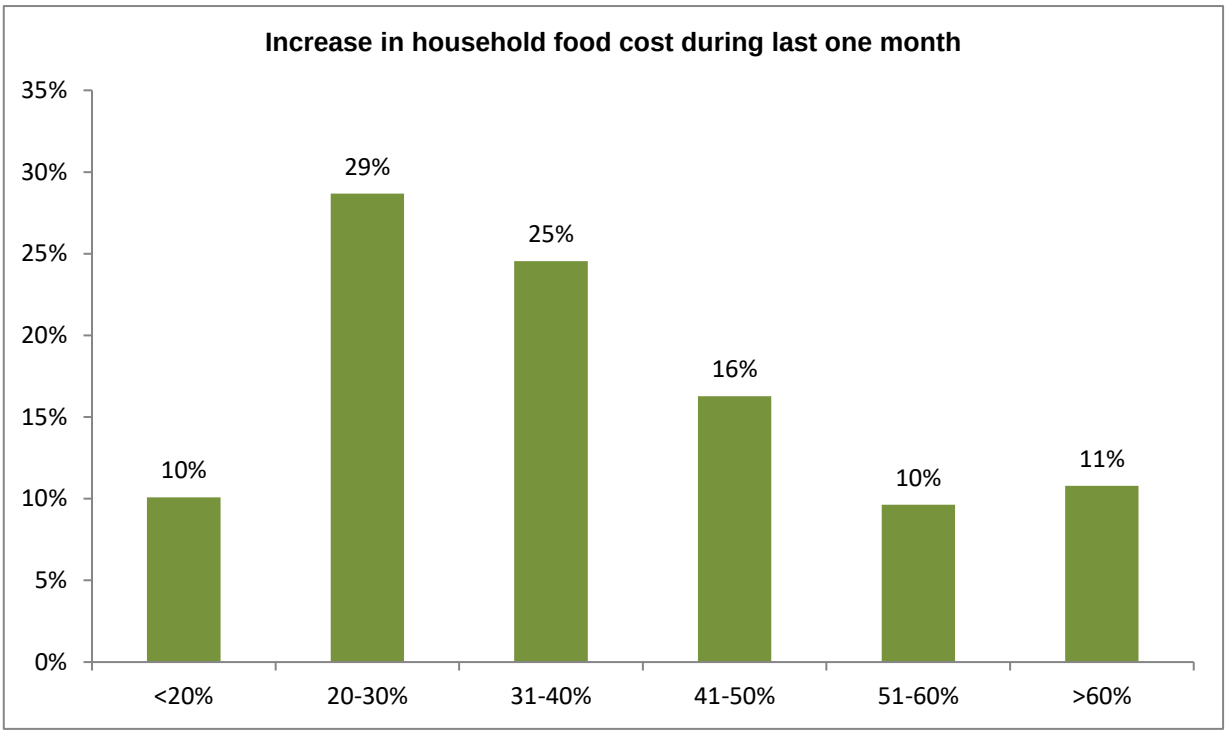


Figure 7: Increase in household food cost during last one month, October 2020

During the survey it was also tried to understand how much household food cost was increased in October 2020 (figure-7). According to the opinion of the respondents the household food cost significantly increased in October 2020 due to price hike. The figure shows that 11% of the respondents opined that their household level food cost was increased more than 60% in that month while 10% of the respondents reported <20% of the increase in food cost. The highest 20% respondents opined that their food cost was increased by 20-30%



Figure 8: % of respondents according to the food purchase during price hike.

while 25% and 16% of the respondents reported the increase of food cost by 31-40% and 41-50% respectively.

Whatever may be the reason for instability in food market and sudden unusual price hike, it apparently compels the poor people to cut their spending for purchasing foodstuffs. The data presented in the figure-8 shows that during the period of price hike only 5% of the respondents could manage to purchase the same amount food that they could purchase before the price hike while rest 95% of the respondents had to purchase little less (32%) and much less (63%) amount compared to the normal price situation.

The data presented in figure-9 shows that maximum 41% of the respondent reduced their food cost by reducing the amount of food purchase by 30% due to the price hike while 26%, 19% and 10% of the respondents reduced the food purchase by >50%, 20% and 10% respectively. The data clearly indicates that due to price hike most of the respondent substantially reduced their food purchase which severely jeopardized the realization of the RTFN and hunger and malnutrition faced by many of the respondents.

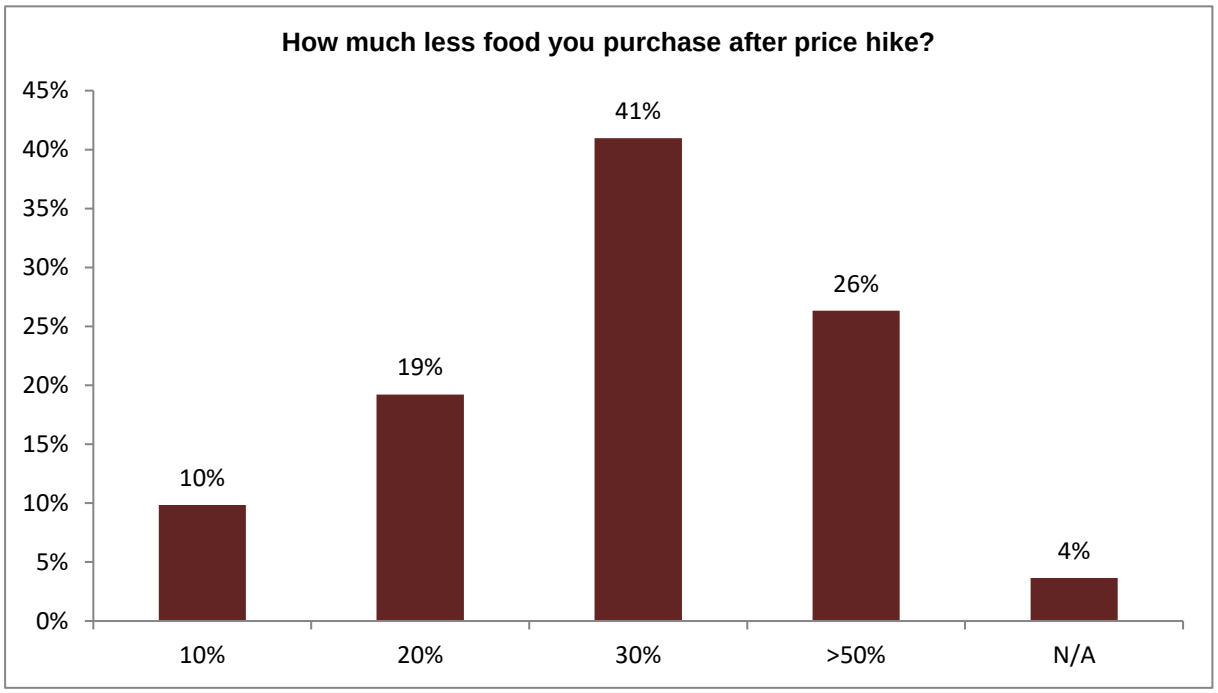


Figure 9: % reduction of food cost due to price hike

It is already seen that the households adjusted their food cost by reducing the amount of purchase. But, for the essential food items like rice, dal, potato, vegetables, spices etc. they had to buy anyhow. In such cases, the households had to cut expenditures for other basic needs. In the survey, 99% of the respondent opined that they had to cut expenditures for other basic needs either often (65%) or sometimes (34%) while only 1% of the respondents had never to do that (figure-10).

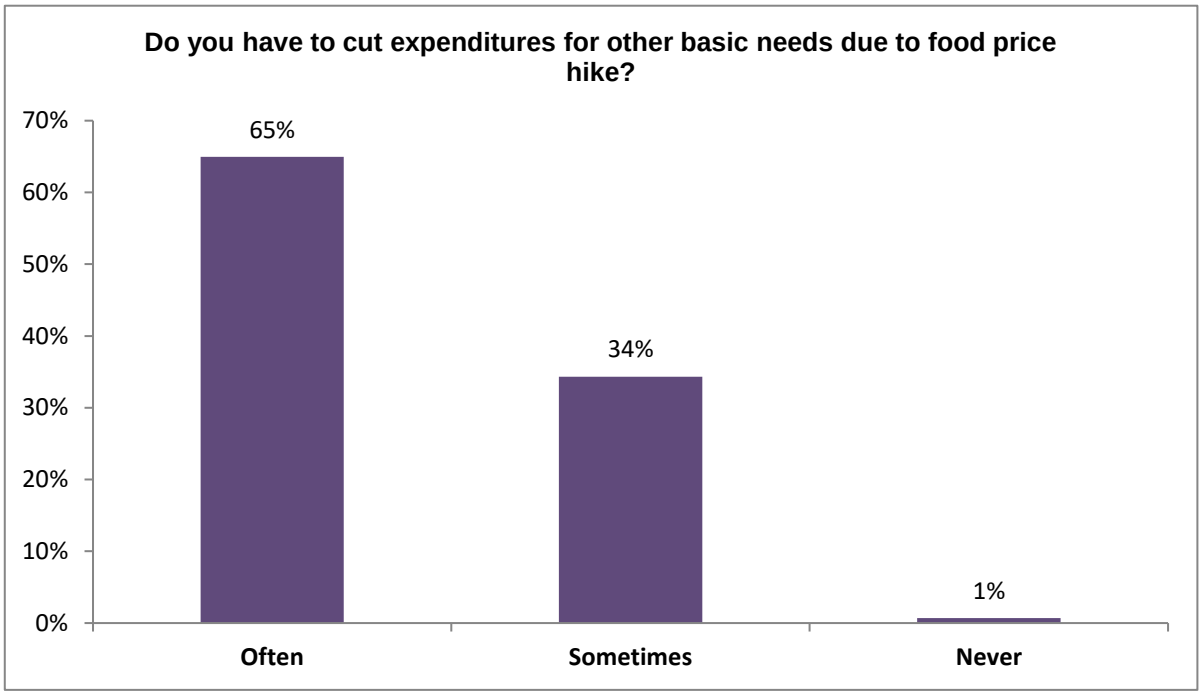


Figure 10: % of respondents cut expenditures of other basic needs due to price hike.

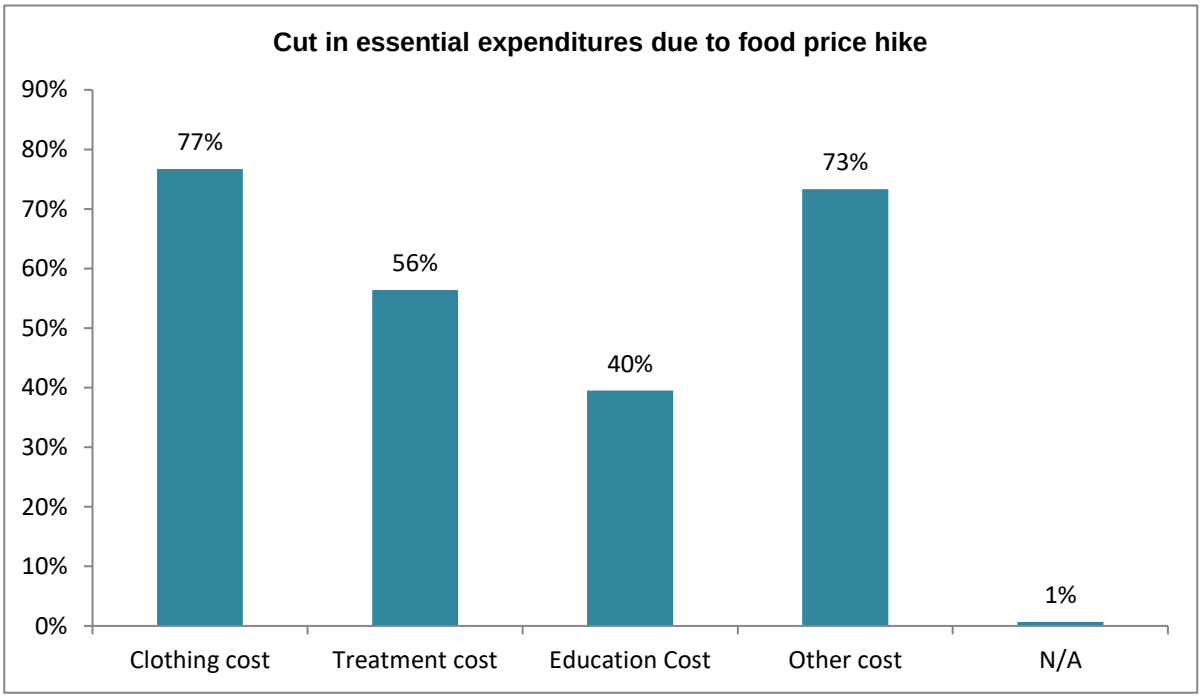


Figure 11: % of respondent cutting the basic need due to price hike

The figure-11 shows that most of the household had to adjust their increased food cost by cutting cost of other basic needs such as clothing (77%), treatment cost (56%), education cost (40%) and other cost (73%).

In order to meet the extra expenditures for food due to price hike the households have often to take loan from microcredit NGOs or local money lenders with high rate of interest. It was

found from the survey that (figure-12) 52% of the households had to take loan during last month may be due to price hike. The average amount of loan was BDT22,076 that ranged between BDT3,500-50,000. Thus the food price hike throws the poor people under huge burden of debt.

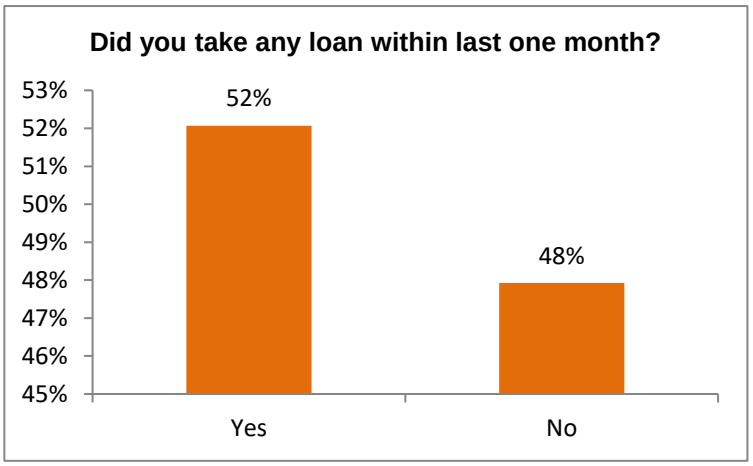


Figure 12: Status of borrowing money of the respondents

5.5 Food security Situation of the Respondent Households

Food security is a complex phenomenon which is very difficult to determine through a rapid survey by using the survey monkey tools. However, it was still tried to understand the food security situation of the household due to the price hike. For this few survey questions were set in line with the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) introduced by FAO. The findings of the survey in this regard are presented below.

The figure-13 gives interesting message on the change in eating habit of the respondents due to price hike. The figure shows that 93% of the respondents said that they could take three meals a day before the price hike which was reduced to 60% due to the price hike. On the contrary, before the price hike only 5% of the respondents used to take two meals a day which was increased to 40% due to the price hike.

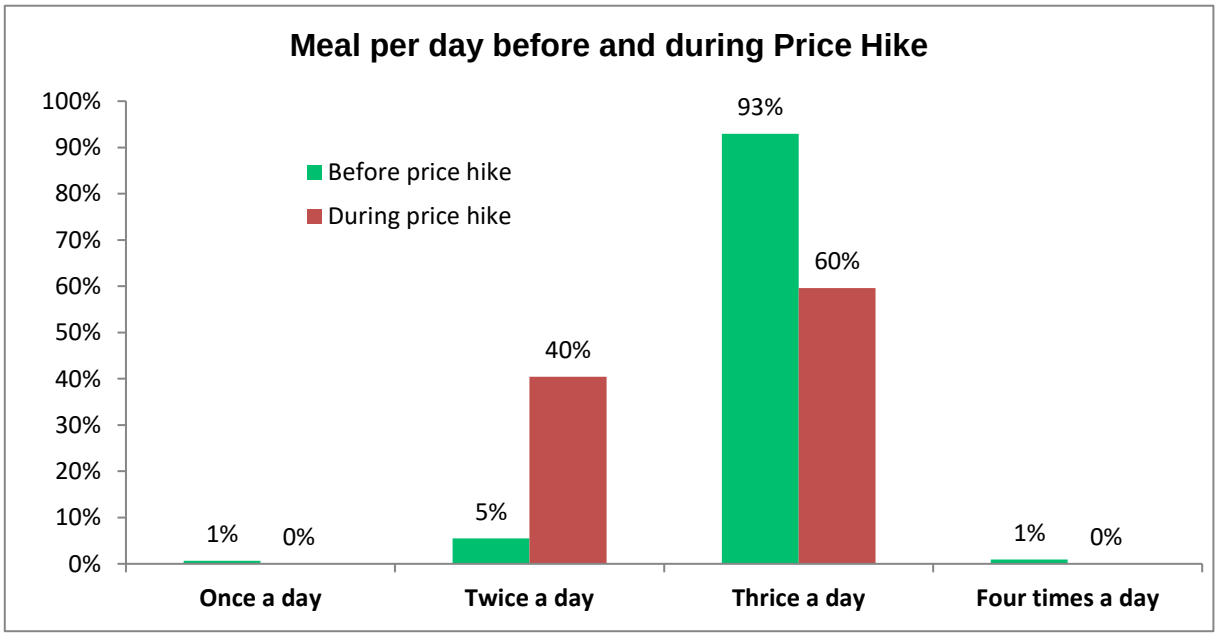


Figure 13: The status of number of meal taken per day by the respondents

In response to the question "Did you pass a day without any food within last one month?" 46% of the respondents said "never" (figure-14). It is very important to note that 35% of the respondents had to pass a day without any food "sometimes" while 20% of the respondents said that "often" they had to pass a day with an empty stomach that indicates their situation of accessibility to food.

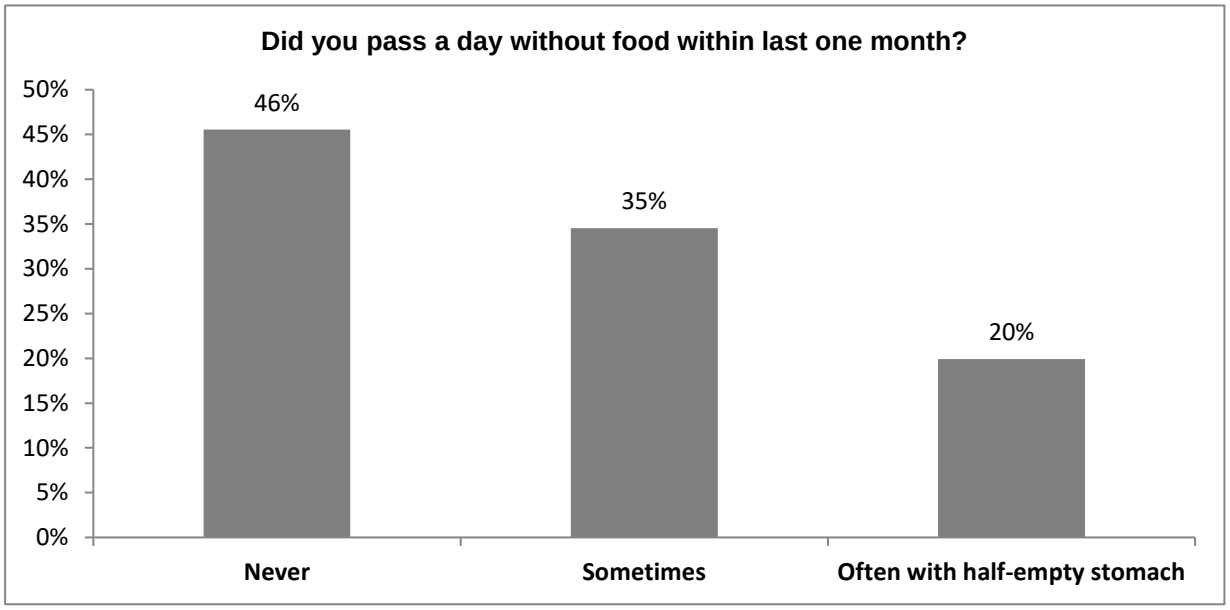


Figure 14: Status of food accessibility of the respondents

5.6 Access to OMS

In order to increase access of the poor people to food as well as to stabilize the price hike the government often run "Open Market Sales (OMS)" programme. During the survey period onion, rice and potato etc. were sold as OMS by the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB). It was therefore, tried to know the experience of the respondents regarding OMS which is presented in figure-15 & 16.

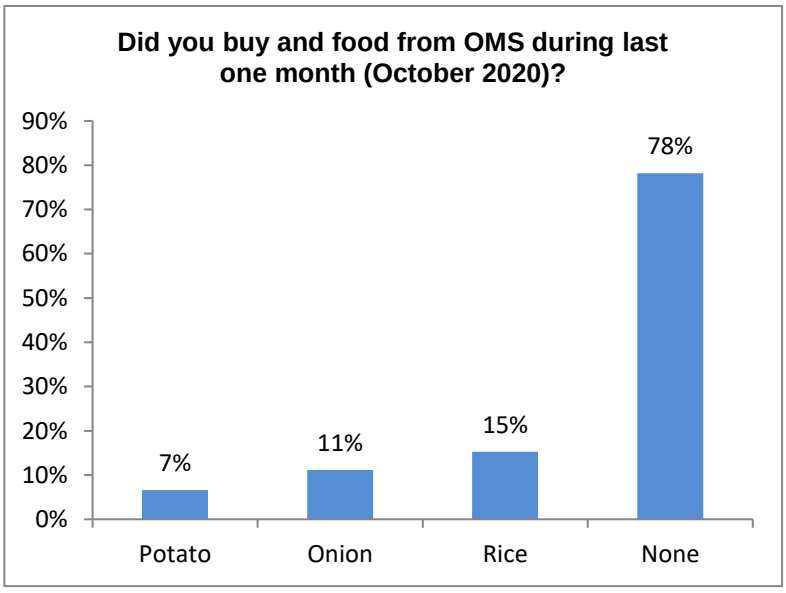


Figure 15: The foodstuffs purchased by the respondents from OMS

It is interesting to observe from the figures that 78% of the respondents didn't buy any food from OMS during last month while only 15%, 11% and 7% of the respondents purchased rice,

onion and potato respectively (figure-15) that indicates the lower effectiveness of the OMS service of the government.

In response to the question of the reasons for not buying food from OMS as presented in figure-16, the highest 25% of the respondents said that they didn't know the place where the OMS sales take place while the second highest 21% of the respondents said that the supply in the OMS was not adequate compared to the demand, so food was not available to them.

On the other hand, due mainly to inadequate supply compared to the demand, the people faced severe time constraints to purchase the food items from OMS because of very long queue. A good number of respondents (19%) said that it took longer time to purchase from the OMS while 12% of the respondent said that the sales point was too far from their residence to go there by affording travel cost and the required time. As because the respondents of the survey were from working class and depend on daily earning for their food, so they couldn't afford to pay enough time to purchase the food from OMS.

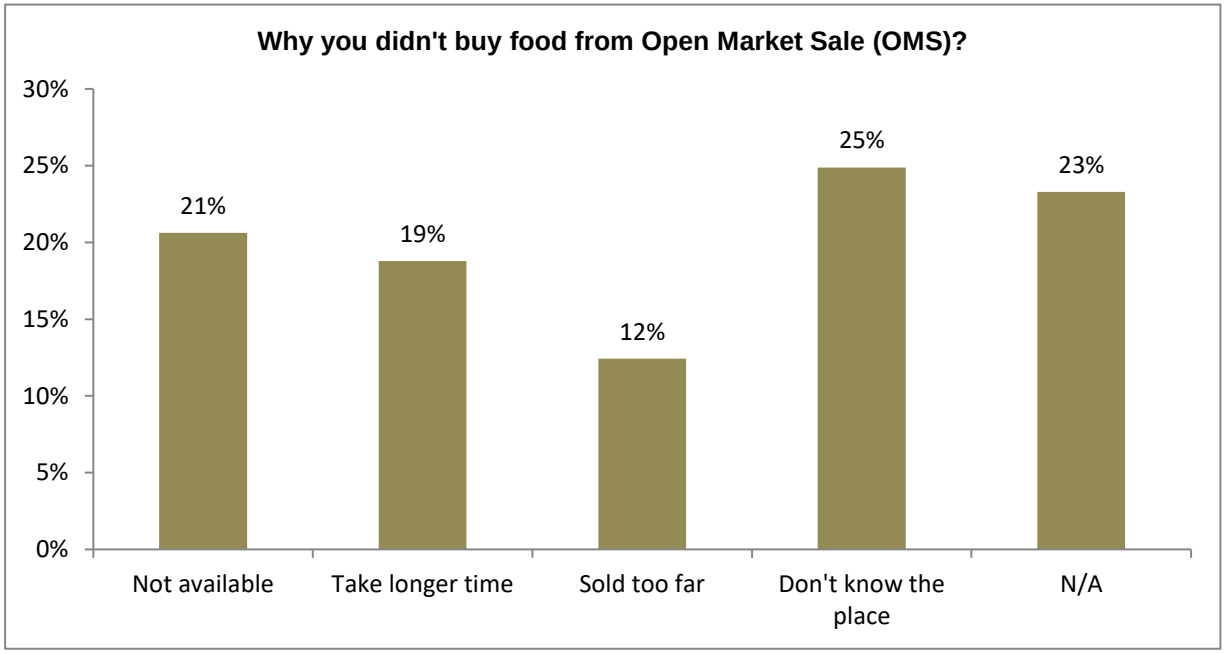


Figure 16: Respondents' opinion regarding reasons for not buying from OMS.

5.7 Responsibility of the Government

The respondents were asked for their opinion regarding the government's responsibilities in combating food scarcity and price hike for the poor people 58% of the respondents opined for providing "ration service" for the poor while 36% and 39% of the respondents opined for providing "price subsidy" and "food allowance" respectively (figure-17). But, it is interesting to note that though too small but still 2% of the respondents opined that there is no responsibility of the government in combating food scarcity and price hike while 19% of the respondents do not know whether the government has any role to play though the government is constitutionally responsible for ensuring the food for all as basic need of every citizen. Therefore, the government seems to handle such a crucial issue of price hike in a very

much relax mode as there is no legal obligation in absence of a right to food law in Bangladesh to respect, protect and fulfill such an important basic human rights of the people in general and poor & hungry people in particular.

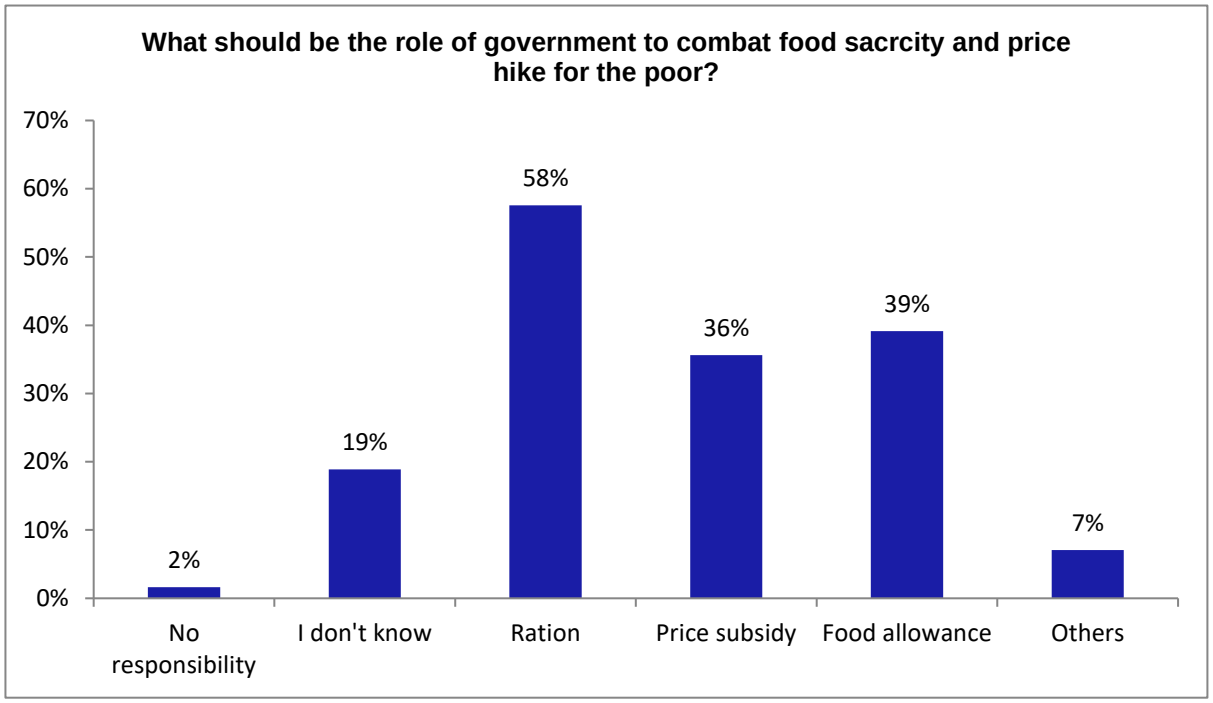


Figure 17: Respondents' opinion regarding responsibility of government in ensuring food for the poor citizens.

4. Food Security Situation in Bangladesh

Ensuring food security of all the people is a great concern for the agriculture of the country. In Bangladesh, despite some impressive gains in recent years in terms of availability of food grains, there still remain several concerns. About 40 million people – one quarter of the population – remain food insecure, and 11 million suffer from acute hunger. Stunting – a condition induced by poor nutrition, with negative effects on a child's physical growth and cognitive development – affects 36 percent of children under 5, with peaks of 50 percent among the poorest and those living in slums. In total, 5.5 million children under 5 are chronically malnourished (WFP, 2020[3]).

In 2019, the Intelligence Unit of the Economist Group conducted a study on the core issues of affordability, availability, and quality of nutritious food to all by calculating 113 countries' data and prepared the Global Food Security Index (GFSI)-2019[4].In the index, Bangladesh ranked 83rd (Score 53.2 out of 100) among 113 countries which is the lowest among South Asian countries. In the index Sri Lanka ranked 66thworldwide and first in South Asia with a score of

[3] https://www.wfp.org/countries/bangladesh

[4] https://foodsecurityindex.eiu.com/index

60.8, followed by India at 72nd (score 58.9), Pakistan 78th (score 56.8) and Nepal 79th (score 56.4).

The GFSI also scored and ranked the food security pillars such as affordability, availability and quality & safety where the scores of Bangladesh are also the lowest among five South Asian countries where Bangladesh (77th; score 60.4) is little ahead of Nepal only (80th; score 58.5) in the food affordability indicator of the index. In the food availability indicator Bangladesh scored 54.8 (79th) which is moderate while the country scored very poor in food quality & safety indicator which is only 30.6 and ranked 107th among 113 countries.

5. Price Hike and Food Security

7.1 Pillar-1: Food availability

In Bangladesh, food availability is almost synonymous to food grain availability particularly the availability of rice. So, Bangladesh is claimed to be self-sufficient in food production since 2005 mainly because of the increased production of rice compared to the requirement though the country seems to be surplus in food grains since few more years back. The claim is also supported by production and requirement data of food grain (rice and wheat only) as presented in the table-1. But, it is quite surprising to see from the table-1 that the import of food grains is increasing in a proportionate trend to the increase of production and the import went to a peak of 9.65 million metric tons in the FY 2017-18 when there was a bumper domestic production of 37.38 million metric tons which is slight below of the highest record of the production (37.41 mmt) in 2018-19.

It is worthy to mention here that for this study it was very difficult to get sufficient ready secondary data on food requirement in Bangladesh which was then calculated by the author by using the available data from different sources like Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and World Bank's population data of Bangladesh.

Unexpectedly, no known and updated demand estimation exercises are done by the government for most of the food Items in Bangladesh, except for rice. Even for rice, there is serious doubt on the authenticity of data. In the absence of correct information on demand and supply of food items a reliable price can simply not be predicted for any economy. Under such circumstances, possibility of market imperfection through manipulation and adoption of unfair means cannot be ruled out (Islam, N and Mukta ZH, 2011[5]).

However, the data presented in the Table-1 shows that every year since 2000 Bangladesh had a substantial amount of surplus of food grains (other minor food grains were taken into

[5] Islam, Nazrul A.K.M and Mukta, Ziaul Hoque, 2011: Institutional and Policy Failure Ignite Food Price Hike in Bangladesh; Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihood, September 2011.

account except rice and wheat). But, still the experts say that there are apprehensions about the production of Bangladesh's main food grain, rice because when disaster strikes, around 2 to 5 per cent of the crops are destroyed and a food shortage emerges.

Table-1: Food grain production & requirement in Bangladesh

Figure in million metric ton

Fiscal Year	Production	Import	Food Aid	Total Availability	Net Availability	Total Requirement	Total Surplus
2000-01	26.76	1.06	0.49	**28.31**	**24.91**	**22.58**	**2.33**
2001-02	25.91	1.29	0.51	**27.71**	**24.38**	**22.99**	**1.39**
2002-03	26.69	2.97	0.25	**29.91**	**26.32**	**23.40**	**2.93**
2003-04	27.44	2.50	0.29	**30.23**	**26.60**	**23.78**	**2.83**
2004-05	26.13	3.08	0.29	**29.51**	**25.97**	**22.92**	**3.04**
2005-06	27.27	2.27	0.19	**29.72**	**26.16**	**23.23**	**2.92**
2006-07	28.06	2.33	0.09	**30.48**	**26.82**	**23.52**	**3.30**
2007-08	29.78	3.21	0.26	**33.25**	**29.26**	**23.79**	**5.46**
2008-09	32.17	2.91	0.12	**35.20**	**30.97**	**24.06**	**6.91**
2009-10	33.23	3.45	0.01	**36.68**	**32.28**	**23.81**	**8.46**
2010-11	34.51	5.15	0.16	**39.83**	**35.05**	**24.09**	**10.96**
2011-12	34.88	2.28	0.12	**37.28**	**32.81**	**24.37**	**8.44**
2012-13	35.09	1.74	0.13	**36.96**	**32.52**	**24.65**	**7.87**
2013-14	35.66	3.05	0.08	**38.78**	**34.13**	**24.93**	**9.19**
2014-15	36.06	5.26	0.01	**41.33**	**36.37**	**25.21**	**11.16**
2015-16	36.05	4.54	0.09	**40.67**	**35.79**	**22.31**	**13.48**
2016-17	35.12	5.74	0.09	**40.94**	**36.03**	**22.55**	**13.47**
2017-18	37.38	9.65	0.12	**47.15**	**41.49**	**22.79**	**18.70**
2018-19	37.41	5.69	0.15	**43.24**	**38.05**	**23.03**	**15.02**

Source: Bangladesh Economic Review 2020[6]; HIES[7] of BBS, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2016. World Bank 2020[8].

Note: *The net availability of food grain has been calculated by deducting 12% due to wastage, use as animal feed & seed etc. HIES 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 & 2016 of BBS and World Bank's population data has been used to calculate the food grain requirement. The food grain requirement per capita/day was taken from HIES as estimated 495g, 475.78g, 451.72g, 442.1g and 387g/person/day in the year 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2016 and onwards respectively.*

In the 2007 cyclones Sidr, there was a 2 million metric tons shortfall of rice. In 2017, the sudden floods in haor led to a 600,000 to 1 million shortfall in rice production. In both those years, the price of rice shot up and Bangladesh was on the list of countries at food risk.

The second main food grain consumed in the country is wheat and this is mainly imported. The annual wheat production in the country is 1 million metric tons in 2018-19 while the

[6]https://mof.portal.gov.bd/site/page/28ba57f5-59ff-4426-970a-bf014242179e/Bangladesh-Economic-Review-2020

[7] http://data.bbs.gov.bd/index.php/catalog/HIES

[8] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=BD

import was 5.5 million metric tons in the same year (BER, 2020[9]). Over the past two years the fungal disease blast has seen a fast decrease in production, though people have changed their food habits and are turning more towards bread and wheat.

However, the figures presented in table-1 bring several vital questions in front.

Firstly, why Bangladesh is importing increasing amount of food grains every year?

Secondly, why the availability of food is always a panic in the country which went to a peak during 2008 while the supply of food grain in the same year was a surplus of 11.8million metric ton?

Thirdly, why the consumers have been suffering a lot due to reckless price hike of food grains since many years where the government seems to be helpless to control the price?

Fourthly, why the government is so much eager to boost up the production of food grain by any means like promoting hybrid varieties that requires more poisonous chemicals? and

Fifthly, why at least20.5% poor people of the country can't afford minimum food for their dietary requirement?

The answer lies within the unjust distribution system of food prevailing in the country aggravated by the so-called free market economy controlled by the traders & corporate for their unfair greed of maximizing profit. Therefore, it is undoubtedly true that only ensuring sufficient supply of food can't ensure 'RTFN' which is also recognized by the WB study. But interestingly, the global policy institutions like WB are looking for the solution of this problem into increasing the purchasing power of the people though the struggle of consumers is quite often observed when there is even adequate supply of food in the market. Therefore, for better understanding of our 'RTFN' constraints both the global and domestic market mechanism and hidden agenda of the market players needs to be fully realized.

7.2 Pillar-2: Food Accessibility

It is already discussed above that only the availability cannot ensure the access to food. The food accessibility or affordability, along with other determinants, is directly related to income or purchasing power of the people coupled with ridiculous food price hike aggravated by the greedy traders by creating artificial crisis of food. As presented the income status of the survey respondents in the key findings section in figure-2, the economic shock caused by COVID-19 pandemic resulted in drastic decline of monthly household income of the poor people of Bangladesh. On the other hand, excessive price hike of most of the essential food items, which is partially caused by prolonged flood this year 2020, drastically retarded the accessibility of the food especially for the poor people which will definitely worsen the poverty and 'RTFN' situation of the country.

[9] https://mof.portal.gov.bd/site/page/28ba57f5-59ff-4426-970a-bf014242179e/Bangladesh-Economic-Review-2020

7.3 Pillar-3: Food Utilization

As discussed earlier in Global Food Security Index (GFSI)-2019, Bangladesh scored very poor in food quality & safety pillar which is only 30.6 out of 100 and ranked 107th among 113 countries. In Bangladesh food quality and safety are a growing concern because millions of tons of agrichemicals are being poured in the field for boosting up the yield of crops. Rampant use of antibiotics and other medicines are being used in producing poultry, cattle and fishes etc. Lots of poisonous chemicals like pesticides & preservatives are being used for conservation and processing of food items. Moreover, rampant food adulteration as well as food processing & marketing in unhygienic condition is also grave concern for food safety. The food stuffs which are specially consumed by the poor people are much more unsafe compared to the food taken by the rich people. The situation obviously deteriorates during the panic of price hike when food adulteration also increases.

On the other hand, as far as nutrition status is concern, the rice-based dietary pattern in Bangladesh causes severe food insecurity of the poor people. Nevertheless, the intake of energy and other essential nutrients is still far below the nutrient requirements and recommended dietary allowances especially for the poor people of Bangladesh. Diets are largely imbalanced with the staple food cereals contributing around 73% of total energy intake, a substantial proportion of dietary protein and also the essential vitamins & minerals. In addition to imbalances in macronutrient intakes, diets are largely deficient in micronutrients, essential fatty acids and individual amino acids. Partly as a consequence of the paucity of diets, there is a high prevalence of malnutrition notably among young children and mothers along with emerging problems of diet related chronic diseases in the country as a whole and poor people in particular.

The food price hike essentially deteriorates the situation of nutrition security especially for the poor people because more shrinkage in dietary diversity. It is the fact that even in normal price situation the poor people have very limited access to diversified food such as fish, meat, egg, milk or even dal as well as fruits and also vegetables in off season resulting in malnutrition or hidden hunger which is severely deteriorate during the price hike situation.

7.4 Pillar-4: Food Stability

Price hike also affect the food stability very much in a country like Bangladesh. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh food production totally depends on blind decision of the farmers' without having any proper pre-plan at national level based on demand data, climatic forecasting etc. Although Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) prepare and estimated target of crop production but it is never matched with farmers' production plan. The farmers' plan of production mostly depends on the market price of the commodity in previous year. When the price of a particular commodity goes high and the farmers get the profitable prices of a particular crop in a certain year more farmers are encouraged to produce more in the subsequent year resulting in excessive production and price fall. On the contrary, when the

price of a particular crop falls down and the farmers commit loss, the farmers are discouraged to produce that crop in the subsequent year resulting in less production and price hike again. This is very common market phenomenon of agricultural products specially food products which is one of the vital causes of instability in food production and food price volatility.

On the other hand, frequent natural disasters, climate induced disasters, depletion of soil fertility status due to excessive use of chemical fertilizers, increased disease and insect infestation may be due to climate change, depletion of agricultural land, use of food grains as bio-fuel and animal feed etc. are the major causes of food instability in Bangladesh. Such instability in domestic food production and supply significantly affects the food stability that severely affects the poor people very much.

6. Recent Food Price Hike in Bangladesh

The prices of most of the essential food items have risen to a peak during last few months. The prices of rice, vegetables such as potatoes, eggplants, okra; spices such as green chilies, onion& garlic; and other essential commodities, such as sugar and eggs, increased in recent months. This, in turn, caused food inflation to go up as well.

However, in order to understand the situations of recent price hike in Bangladesh only the cases of coarse rice of HYV Aman varieties and onion are discussed below just for example.

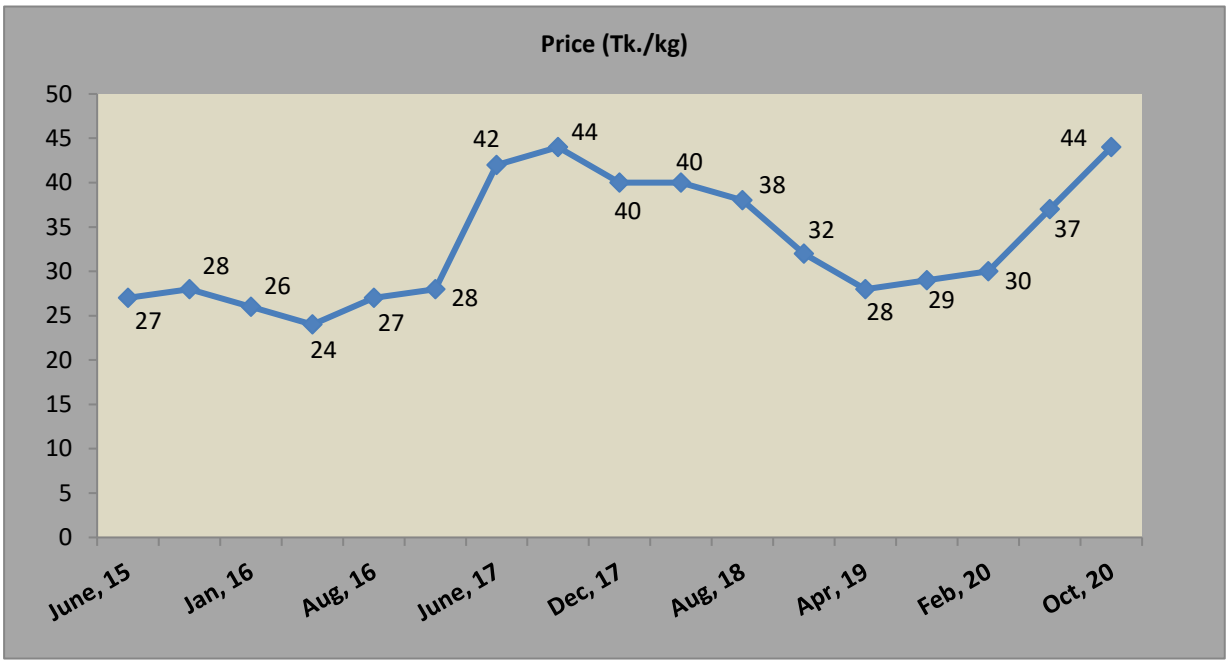


Figure 18: Changes in prices of Aman-HYV-Coarse rice during 2015-2020; [Source: DAM, 2020]

Looking at the figure-18, the monthly national average prices[10] of staple food rice of Aman-HYV-coarse varieties which are especially consumed by the poor people, during last five years anyone can understand the instability and unusual hike of price in Bangladesh. The figure

[10] http://www.dam.gov.bd/

shows that in June 2015 the national average price of Aman-HYV-coarse rice was 27 Tk./kg which was increased to a peak of 44Tk./kg in December 2017. The increase was 62% within a period of only one and half a year which was then decreased to 28Tk./kg in April 2019 and again increased up to the peak 44Tk./kg in October 2020. The figure also shows that the price was more or less stable during the period of January 2016 to June 2017 and then a sharp increase is observed that remained high next more than one and half a year until August 2018.

On the other hand, the monthly national prices[11] of onion in 2019 and 2020 are presented in figure-19. The figure shows that the price of onion was more or less stable between 45-50Tk/kg from January to June 2019 then a spiky increase is observed that reached to a peak (about 155Tk./kg) in November 2019 due mainly to the sudden export ban imposed by the India to Bangladesh despite the government's declaration of enough domestic stock at that time. In fact, the actual retail price reached more than 200Tk./kg at that time.

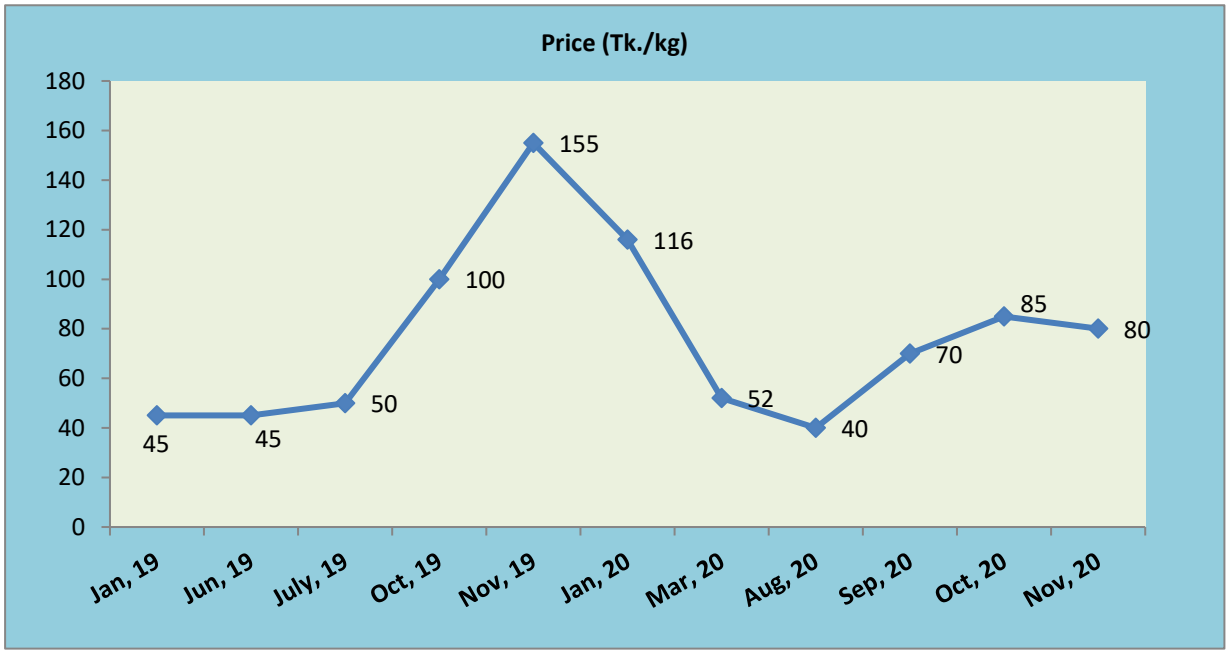


Figure 19: Monthly increase of the price of onion (local) in 2019. [Source: DAM, 2020]

It was massively reported by the media at that time that hoarding of onion by the traders was the main reason of such unprecedented price hike. In spite of massive legal action taken by the administration against the illegal hoarding coupled with other actions like Open Market Sales (OMS) and easing import from other sources, the government was literally failed to control the price hike of onion at that time. The price was then started to decline after the domestic harvest of onion during February-March 2020 the price was declined to 40-45 Tk./kg up to August 2020 and then once again a sharp increase (80Tk./kg) is observed since September 2020. It is interesting to mention that the same thing was repeated in 2020 due to export ban of onion once again by India to Bangladesh said to be because of the domestic onion crisis in India, despite their promise to the government of Bangladesh to inform well-

[11] http://www.dam.gov.bd/

ahead of imposing such export ban. Here, there is strong public perception that the export ban was politically motivated in order to put pressure on the government of Bangladesh for supporting India in the regional geo-political issues.

This is not a new case where food is often used as political weapon. There are strong evidences that the famine of 1974 in Bangladesh was artificially created by a few global political forces especially USA which is a burning example of evil political power game with newly born Bangladesh. The Nobel laureate economist Amartaya Sen[12] also exposed the crude truth of such evil political games and exploitation that caused death of millions of people due to famine during the British rule in the Indian subcontinent. It is important to note that vested interest of the traders which is often supported by the political forces is also one of the root causes of unpredictable and unethical price hike in Bangladesh and also in the world.

7. The Causes of Food Price Hike

The inconsistency between demand and supply is popularly considered to be the root cause of price instability or hike of any consumable good in the so-called free-market system. But, in case of essential food items the demands remain almost constant under any given situation. Therefore, changes in supply mainly determine the prices of essential food stuff.

Due to the natural disasters coupled with unethical behavior of the food traders especially the illegal food hoarding for making huge profit, the prices of essential food stuff have been escalated day by day. It is well-known in Bangladesh that syndication among the food traders often create artificial crisis of food due mainly to illegal hoarding of food stuff and rapid spread of panic among the consumers which stimulates the consumers to go for panic purchase. As a result the prices go out of control of the market regulatory authorities. In such cases, we often observe that various actions taken by the regulatory bodies even the legal actions do not work at all and finally the government use to say that they have nothing more to do in the free market economy. In fact, the government and the traders try to blame the free market system and the price volatility in the international food market. But, in such blame game very often it is surprisingly observed that the prices in Bangladesh don't change in line with the changes in international market that indicate the institutional failure.

However, the followings could be the root causes of food price volatility and hike in a country like Bangladesh.

[12] https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0198284632.001.0001/acprof-9780198284635; Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation by Amartya Sen.

1. Unpredictable production loss due to the natural disasters along with post harvest loss, food waste etc. that cause food scarcity and food price volatility in both domestic and international market.
2. Creation of artificial & manipulated supply scarcity through illegal hoarding and creating panic by the traders for making unethical profit.
3. Failure of market regulatory bodies due to lack of enough capacity, policy instruments, corruption or other vested interests.
4. Sudden export ban by any exporting country may be due to domestic crises or diplomatic reason.
5. Lack of authentic demand and supply data to prepare appropriate production and import plan.
6. Blockage /disruption in supply chain due to natural disasters, political unrest, vested political interest etc.
7. Panic purchase by the consumers when the rumor of crisis is intentionally spread by the traders.
8. Decrease of purchasing power due to economic shock or economic recession caused by disaster like COVID-19 pandemic.
9. Use of food as political weapon.
10. Neo-liberal trade policies imposed by the organizations like WTO in favour of companies and traders.

10. Effects of Food Price Hike on Poor People

The specific effects of the price hike on the RTFN of low-income working class are already discussed in the "Key Finding of the Survey" section of the report based of the survey findings. It is important to note again the study is conducted in the time when the economic shock of COVID-19 pandemic has drastically reduced the purchasing power of the poor people rigorously hindering their accessibility to food.

It is already reported above that among the respondents more than 80% opined that the prices of Rice (86%), Onion (94%), Potato (91%) and vegetables (81%) went beyond their purchasing capacity during last three months while more than 50% of the respondents had an opinion that the prices of Dal (62%) such as Lentil, Mungbean etc. and other food items (55%) such as fish, meat, egg, milk, which are the major sources of protein for the poor people, were too high to afford by them.

As a result, 93% of the respondents said that they could take three meals a day before the price hike which was reduced to 60% due to the price hike. On the contrary, before the price

hike only 5% of the respondents used to take two meals a day which was increased to 40% due to the price hike. It is very important to note that 35% of the respondents had to pass a day without any food "sometimes" while 20% of the respondents said that "often" they had to pass a day with an empty stomach that indicates their situation of accessibility to food. Moreover, they respondents had to adjust with the crises by reducing their food purchase and/or cutting costs from the other basic needs like education, clothing and even healthcare. However, the life of the low income and middle income group is affected very much because of the price hike of the essential food items. The consumers have either bound to cut their expenditures or lend money to manage their extra expenditures due to price hike.

However, in general in a low income, poverty-affected economy like Bangladesh, food price hike has enormous economic, social, cultural and political impacts particularly on the 'RTFN' and livelihood of the poor people. There are several studies which have reported how the people of the country, particularly the low income earning groups and poor-marginalized farmers have suffered due to food price spike. Similarly, the poverty level in the country might have inflated as people's income has not increased accordingly.

Recently in Bangladesh, the COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to 'RTFN' and nutrition because of the economic shock. Economic turmoil caused by the pandemic threatens both economic and physical access to food (FAO, 2019[13]). In Bangladesh, a nationwide survey conducted by BRAC (BRAC, 2020[14]) found that 93 percent of respondents have suffered a loss of earnings, with 54 percent reporting no income in March 2020. The study estimated a 60 percentage-point increase in extreme poverty (from 24 percent to 84 percent). Increased poverty of this magnitude will likely push many people into food insecurity in the short term. In the long term, attempts to cope with the economic shock will lead to lasting negative effect for many: family hardship will force children out of school; people will sell productive assets at low prices; children will lack nutritious food at critical growth stages of their lives (e.g. the first 1000 days).The price hike has come up as pouring water on a drowned mouse upon the life of the poor people of the country.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates suggest a slow reducing trend in the prevalence of undernourishment in Bangladesh reaching 13.0% in 2017−2019. This reduction makes the General Economic Division (GED) target feasible although the COVID−19 crisis may dampen this progress. Indeed, it is expected that the crisis will reverse the gains made in nutrition improvement and impact the most vulnerable first and hardest. The COVID−19 crisis has made it clear that socio−economic inequality is a maker of malnutrition[15].

[13] http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/resources/policy-briefs/en/?page=5&tx_dynalist_pi1[par]=YToxOntzOjE6IkwiO3M6MToiMCI7fQ==
[14] BRAC, 2020. Rapid Perception Survey on COVID19 Awareness and Economic Impact. Dhaka, Bangladesh.
[15] http://www.fao.org/3/ca9692en/online/ca9692en.html

The prevalence of severe food insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) improved, down to 10.6% in 2017−19 from 11.6% in 2016−18. Following a slight decline, the three−year average for 2016−18 and 2017−19 has stagnated at 31.5% for moderate food insecurity, however. These figures are noticeably below the South Asia averages, which stand at 16.0% for severe food insecurity and 33.4% for moderate food insecurity over 2017−19, respectively. Food insecurity is likely to have worsened for the poorest, those on the brink of poverty, those heavily dependent on remittances, and daily rural labourers[16].

11. Emerging Challenges in ensuring RTFN

However, according to a report on the 'State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020' jointly prepared by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, more than 820 million people in the world are hungry. Undernourishment is a problem not just in few selected countries, but worldwide. Despite an abundance of food availability, the index indicates that 10 percent or more of the population of more than a third of the countries is undernourished[17].

The report also says that the world is progressing neither towards SDG target 2.1, of ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all people all year round, nor towards target 2.2, of eradicating all forms of malnutrition. There are many threats to progress. The 2017 and 2018 editions of this report showed that conflict and climate variability and extremes undermine efforts to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. In 2019, the report showed that economic slowdowns and downturns also undercut these efforts. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as unprecedented Desert Locust outbreaks in Eastern Africa are obscuring economic prospects in ways no one could have anticipated, and the situation may only get worse if we do not act urgently and take unprecedented action.

12. Conclusion

RTFN is a complex, multi-dimensional issue. In order to guarantee RTFN now and in the future, countries need to ensure that food is affordable, sufficiently available for their population, and meets their dietary needs. In nearly one-quarter of countries, more than 20% of people fall below the global poverty line for lower-middle income countries[18].

As food is the basic human rights and the most basic thing for right to life which is recognized by the UN and also the constitution of Bangladesh and as because ensuring RTFN is a must for achieving the sustainable development goal of alleviating poverty and eliminating hunger, there is no other way but ensuring availability, accessibility, utilization and stability of food for

[16] http://www.fao.org/3/ca9692en/online/ca9692en.html
[17] https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/state-of-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-world-2020.
[18] Global food security index 2019, an infographic by the economic intelligence unit of the economist.

all people. Most importantly, ensuring RTFN should be legal responsibility of any government to respect, protect and fulfill the right of every citizen of the country.

Bangladesh is still lagging far behind in ensuring RTFN of her population especially of them who are still can't afford the minimum calorie intake to fulfill their nutritional requirements. Uncontrollable price hike coupled with unemployment & livelihood insecurity worsening the situation. Weak planning, policy instruments, management capacity and finally the lack of strong political will cause the failure of the state to fulfill such a constitutional responsibility which have to be improved in no time.

For doing this enacting a 'right to food law' in line with the RtFG[19] of FAO, VGGT[20] and Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI[21] Principles) coupled with the CEDAW and ICESCR is very essential for the country that could guide the government to take appropriate step in fulfilling the RTFN especially for the low-income people of Bangladesh. The law must respect, protect and fulfill the RTFN of the low-income people in every adverse situation including price hike as they are the most vulnerable to price volatility and any natural or man-made disasters and it must be under the UPR[22] of UNHRC. At the same time the rights of the small-scale producers, who are also represent the most vulnerable group, must also be protected by the national and global policy frameworks.

13. Recommendations

As the demands of the essential food stuff are almost stable for a certain period, so the efficient management of supply is the key instrument for keeping the food price stable. Strong policy along with institutional instruments and capacity are much needed for the efficient supply management. Maintaining the food production and import to meet the domestic demands is very much important for the efficient supply management. But, very unfortunately the country doesn't have sufficient reliable food production and requirement data. Moreover, the food production is very much dependent on climatic factors which are rapidly changing due to climate change.

In order to maintain stable domestic production ensuring profitable prices for the farmers especially for the smallholder farmers is a crying need for the purpose. In a certain year if the producers don't get profitable price of a food crop the production of that crop essentially decrease in the subsequent year or growing season. It is good luck of the nation that the smallholder farmers continue their production despite they are deprived of profitable prices of most of the crops. The agriculture is being more commercialized day by day and the farming is gradually going into the grip of big producers and corporations that might be a

[19] http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/214344/RtFG_Eng_draft_03.pdf
[20] http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/activities/vggt/en/
[21] http://www.fao.org/cfs/home/activities/rai/en/
[22] https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/uprmain.aspx

great threat for the food sovereignty or RTFN of the poor people of the country like Bangladesh.

In such a situation the following measures could be taken to control food price hike in Bangladesh by ensuring RTFN of the poor and safeguarding small-scale food producers.

1. Immediately formulate and enact a 'right to food law' in Bangladesh in line with the RtFG of FAO, VGGT, RAI in order to respect, protect and fulfill the RTFN security especially for the poor people of the country what the country obliged to do according to the global treaties or policy frameworks like ICESCR, CEDAW and CRC which are already ratified by the country.
2. Taking immediate measures to respect and strengthen traditional and indigenous food systems and a transition towards agro-ecological food systems for safeguarding small-scale food producers[23].
3. Ensure profitable prices for the smallholder producers and supporting them to sustain in commercial agriculture in order to ensure a stable domestic production of essential food crops and protect their rights in line with SSF Guidelines[24] and CFS-RAI Principles[25].
4. Rationing of essential food stuff like rice, onion, wheat, potato, oil etc. for the low-income groups.
5. Improve capacity of BBS, DAM, DAE and other relevant government institutions in managing authentic data on food production, requirement and prices.
6. Formation of price commission for efficient market monitoring.
7. Strengthening the capacity of TCB in effective and efficient OMS of essential food products.
8. Efficient forecasting on food production in the face of climate induced and natural disasters.
9. Efficient management of import for maintaining domestic supply in line with the domestic requirement.
10. Efficient forecasting on food prices in international market and taking necessary precautionary measures well ahead of the food crisis.
11. Strengthening administration and law enforcing agencies with effective legal and policy instruments to control illegal hoarding and price hike.
12. Strengthening coordination mechanism among MoA, MoFL, MoFDM, MoC and other government institutions relevant to RTFN for better management of food production and distribution system.

[23] https://www.fian.org/files/files/Covid_Monitoring_Report_-Template_EN.pdf
[24] http://www.fao.org/3/cb0927en/CB0927EN.pdf
[25] http://www.fao.org/voluntary-guidelines-small-scale-fisheries/resources/detail/en/c/1308532/