

Report on Emergency situation due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)



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Introduction

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) that spread from Wuhan, China, last December 2019, is currently pandemic worldwide. This threatens the existence of human civilization today. The virus has been infected by more than 30,03,392 people worldwide. Of which more than 2,07,096 people have died (on 27/04/2020 at 8:35 GMT, source: *worldometers.info*). The number of these deaths is increasing manifold daily.

The virus is spreading from person to person as no antidote to the virus has been discovered and is highly contagious. As a result, the virus began to infect the countries of Europe in the second phase. Italy was the first European country to be infected with the virus. With no prior preparation, the country becomes a valley of death. After that United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany and United States of America has joined the death march. After Europe, the virus has started spreading to South Asian country like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Now the question is, where the situation of developed and rich countries is mournful, how will the situation of developing country like Bangladesh be?

Global situation

Information from the most vulnerable countries with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, as well as the countries in South Asia, is presented in the following table to illustrate the terrible aggression of the virus:

Reporting Country	Total confirmed cases	Total deaths	Date
United States of America	987322	55415	27 April 2020
Italy	197675	26644	
Spain	226629	23190	
France	162100	22856	
The United Kingdom	152840	20732	
Germany	157770	5976	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	90481	5710	
China	84338	4642	26 April 2020
Netherlands	37845	4475	27 April 2020
India	27977	884	
Pakistan	13328	281	
Bangladesh	5913	152	

Data Source: World Health Organization; worldometers.info

It is clear that, The USA is now at the top in terms of infection and mortality and Italy is now at the second position in terms of mortality caused by COVID-19.

Bangladesh in the current context

On 24 March, The Government of Bangladesh announced the closure of all public and private offices for a 10 day period from March 26 to April 4 as part of its efforts to contain the spread of the novel Coronavirus. Public transport services are also suspended from March 26 across the country. Hospitals, kitchen markets, drug stores and other emergency services, however, will remain open. On 5 April, the government announced to extend the deadline with another week until **14 April, 2020**, which was subsequently extended until **5 May**. The government has repeatedly been asking people to stay home in efforts to contain the spread of the virus.



Thousands of poor people are bearing the brunt of the deadly virus without being infected. Poor and low-income people have already been seriously affected and even the middle class will be affected if the pandemic continues longer. People who live hand to mouth have lost their income and the prices of daily essentials have climbed up. As time elapses, the situation will be even worse.

Status of Dalit's working area

In the present situation, the condition of the dalit and backward population has become very miserable. Because most of them are day laborers and they make a living by pulling rickshaw-van, working in the land of others or selling bamboo made products in different areas. At present, all vehicles are stopped and shops or markets are closed due to the lockdown of the whole country. Due to this, poor and needy people are living in extreme hardship due to lack of food. Collecting food and surviving is more important to them than preventing the Coronavirus.

At present, The Government of Bangladesh has not started massive relief work among the people as they are busy collecting medical equipments and preventing the virus. The amount of relief that various private organizations and individuals are distributing is insufficient. Most importantly, the relief materials are not reaching to any dalit people.

Dalit's effort

Since Dalit organization has no emergency relief fund, the staff of the organization paid the equivalent amount of 1 day salary to Dalit to provide food to the starving people. The Executive Director of Dalit deposited the money into the District Social Services Department's relief fund on April 1st 2020. As a result, Department of Social Services, Khulna jointly organized relief distribution programs with Dalit. Later, Dalit distributed relief separately in three Upazilas with the collaboration of UNDP, National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh and Upazila administration. Families of extreme poor and untouchable communities were chosen to provide relief. Detailed information on relief distribution is provided below:

Upazila/ area	Date	Number of supported families	Name of Goods/ materials	Quantity per family
Khulna City Corporation	April 6, 2020	140 families	Rice Lentils Cooking oil	10 Kilograms 2 Kilograms 1 Liter
	April 22, 2020	102 families	Salt Soap Potato	1 Kilogram 2 Pieces 5 Kilograms
Digholia Upazila, Khulna	April 24, 2020	144 families	Rice Wheat flour Sugar Onion	15 Kilograms 5 Kilograms 2 Kilograms 3 Kilograms
	April 25, 2020	161 families	Lentils Cooking oil Flattened Rice Salt	2 Kilograms 2 Liters 1 Kilogram 1 Kilogram
Dumuria Upazila, Khulna	April 24 and 25, 2020	445 families	Soap	2 Pieces
Paikgachha Upazila, Khulna	April 26, 2020	200 families	Potato	5 Kilograms

All health related rules and regulations have been properly followed during the distribution of relief. The standing area of people has already been marked for physical distance as directed by the health department and everyone is allowed to use hand sanitizer. The local police administration has provided assistance to Dalit in these works.



Distribution in Khulna City area



Distribution in Digholia Upazila area

Besides, the Executive Director of Dalit has been making various efforts to raise fund for distribution of relief goods among the starving people of organization's working area. For this purpose, a quick family survey program has been conducted in the working area to determine the number of people in need. The survey information is presented below:

District	Upazila/ area	No. of Villages	No. of Families	No. of People
Khulna	Khulna City Corporation	32	950	3,065
	Dumuria	67	2,600	11,700
	Dacope	19	1,382	6,219
	Phultala	27	1,100	4,950
	Digholia	14	3,120	14,040
	Terokhada	6	1,250	5,625
	Paikgachha	29	2,713	12,208
Jashore	Keshabpur	45	5,500	24,750
	Manirampur	48	8,000	36,000
Satkhira	Tala	57	6,423	28,903
	Shyamnagar	5	250	1,125
	Satkhira City	13	390	1,755
Bagerhat	Fakirhat	1	22	99
	Mongla	1	25	112
Total		364	33,725	150,551

Whatever is needed for assistance

At this moment Dalit's beneficiaries are passing days half-fed for lack of foods and also suffering from summer-time diseases. Now they need food (rice, lentil, potato, cooking oil, salt etc.), oral saline and hygiene materials like face mask, hand gloves, soap and

hand sanitizer to protect themselves from Coronavirus. However, since it is not possible to provide support to the above mentioned population, so Dalit plans to distribute 1 week worth of food and other hygiene materials to 11,000 poorest families (subject to receipt of funds). That will require BDT. 4,40,00,000.

Apart from this, there is a 10 bed Hospital directed by Dalit, where specialist doctors, nurses and health workers are employed. At this time of the outbreak of Coronavirus, where the people is unable to get out of the house and cannot get general treatment at various public and private hospitals, but doctors and staff of Dalit Hospital can take medical service to the doorsteps of the people. Dalit Hospital has a medical team who has experience in providing health care during various disasters. However, the main problem is Dalit Hospital has no ambulance of its own, which makes the hospital unable to operate mobile clinics. Because, at the present time, all public transport is closed, patients are unable to come to the hospital. Therefore, Dalit needs BDT 71,25,000 or 75,000 Euros to purchase an ambulance (worth 35,000 Euros) and providing medicine assistance and managing service activities (worth 40,000 Euros). In this, Dalit will be able to protect the people of its working area, especially pregnant mothers and childs from health risks.

Expressing gratitude

Hopefully, by responding to Dalit's call, some respected Donors and friends have come forward to support 3,600 vulnerable families of Dalit's working area. With their support, a short-term project will be implemented in 8 Unions of 3 Upazilas (sub-districts) to distribute 9,000 pieces mask, 7,200 pieces soap/ hand wash, supplementary medicines and foods through family visit. In addition, public awareness will be raised through awareness-raising posters/ leaflets and micking (information dissemination through loud speaker).

Conclusion

Dalit, along with the World Health Organization, fear that the outbreak of the Coronavirus will take a serious shape in Bangladesh from this April. Because of this, the scope of lockdown nationwide will also be increased. As a result, the most affected people will be day laborers, dalits and backward community people. Due to the fact that Dalit's working area is in remote areas, so very few relief materials and medical services reached there. So Dalit is feeling very much inclined to help the vulnerable people. We hope, in this type of emergency situation; friends and well wishers of Dalit will show

quick response and will agree to do something for the starving and unprotected people at risk of the Coronavirus.