

**A study on Plain Land Ethnic  
Minority Group towards  
Agenda 2030**

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## Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the study**

To empower marginalized and vulnerable groups worldwide in the context of SDG implementation, 'Leave no one behind' (LNOB) has been initiated by twelve International Civil Society Organizations (ICSOs). The partnership is hosted and managed by the International Civil Society Centre. All LNOB partner organizations share a common knowledge base and have a long-term proven track of experience in reaching out to marginalized communities worldwide.

In Bangladesh, nine leading INGOs are actively engaged in the LNOB platform. The initiatives aim to generate evidence on SDG in different hotspots across the Globe, to do advocacy, and build accountability of Governments. It is envisaged that the joining of leading INGOs will enrich the platform, as each one has their expertise and diversified reach.

The LNOB platform in Bangladesh has been proactively engaged in collecting evidence from different marginalized groups. The platform has identified the eight most marginalized groups along with geographical hotspots from where the data will be collected. The groups identified are; Dalits, transgender, urban floating poor, people living in the wetland area, people residing in Char (river basin prone to flooding and submerging), chronically ill/PLWHIV, extremely poor, and indigenous tribal.

To support LNOB work in Bangladesh, CARE, CBM, HI, Islamic Relief Bangladesh, and VSO have mutually decided to conduct a study on one of the marginalized groups- plain land ethnic minority group.

The proposed study aims to collect and generate evidence from the targeted plain land ethnic minority group. Various reports indicated that after the COVID-19 pandemic the condition of indigenous tribal groups has worsened. A report published by the Indigenous People's Development Services (IPDS), a leading organization working on ethnic minority group, revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has caused a

precipitate and alarming decline in the livelihoods of plain lands Indigenous peoples. The report further highlights a significant rise by 62% in the number of people who are falling below the poverty line (\$1.90 World Bank) Over 60% of respondents have received no relief whatsoever from either the State or Non-Governmental Organizations and discrimination against Indigenous Peoples by duty-bearers in the allocation of relief supplies. As the pandemic has prolonged and the crisis has further deepened. The proposed research accumulated data and information on majority plain land ethnic minority groups such as - Santal, Garo, Hagong, Urao, Munda, mahali, Turi, and Tripura to have evidence/data on a) impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the plain land ethnic minority group in terms of livelihoods and food security; b) coping mechanisms adopted by plain land ethnic minority group to address the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on livelihoods and food security and c) level of inclusiveness of government social safety net programmes for the plain land ethnic minority group.

The study findings are expected to support the platform to collectively undertake advocacy with the Government of Bangladesh and relevant stakeholders to achieve SDG's mandate, specifically SDG 1 and SDG 2 of Government of Bangladesh.

## **Objectives**

### ***Overall objective:***

To brief the government and advocate providing data/ ideas/directions for undertaking necessary initiatives for future programming to improve livelihoods of plain land ethnic minorities towards Agenda 2030.

### ***Specific objectives:***

- To understand and analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods and food security of plain land ethnic minority communities;
- the identify coping mechanisms adopted by plain land ethnic minority group to address the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on livelihoods and food security;
- to collect and generate evidence on targeting and inclusion of government social safety net programmes, its effectiveness, and impact on the marginalized

plain land ethnic minority population during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh; and

- to disseminate the key findings and possible strategies to allow collective undertaking of advocacy through the LNOB platform with the Government of Bangladesh and relevant stakeholders to achieve SDG's mandate, specifically on the livelihoods and food security of the Government of Bangladesh.

## Chapter 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

On the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, on 9 August 2021, UN general secretary, António Guterres, asserted that more than 476 million indigenous live in 90 countries of the world who are historically marginalized, discriminated and excluded. They constitute 6.2% of the world's population face injustice.<sup>1</sup>

In Bangladesh, the constitution recognizes various ethnic groups living within the country and designates them as 'ethnic minorities. The GoB is deeply committed to protect and promote the rights of the religious and ethnic minorities in the country.<sup>2</sup> If fact, Bangladesh considers all its citizens as indigenous to its land. According to the Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, apex advocacy and a networking organization of the ethnic minorities, 3 million tribal peoples are residing in Bangladesh.<sup>3</sup> By any estimate, tribal peoples constitute no more than between 1-2% of the total population of Bangladesh.<sup>4</sup> The majority ethnicity is Bengali, an ethno-linguistic group, comprising over 98 per cent of the population. According to the 2011 Census, approximately 1.8 per cent of the population are indigenous 'Adivasis', amounting to around 1.6 million - though some

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<sup>1</sup> End inequalities, recognize abuses, UN chief says on International Day of Indigenous Peoples  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097382>

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Thirtieth session 7–18 May 2018

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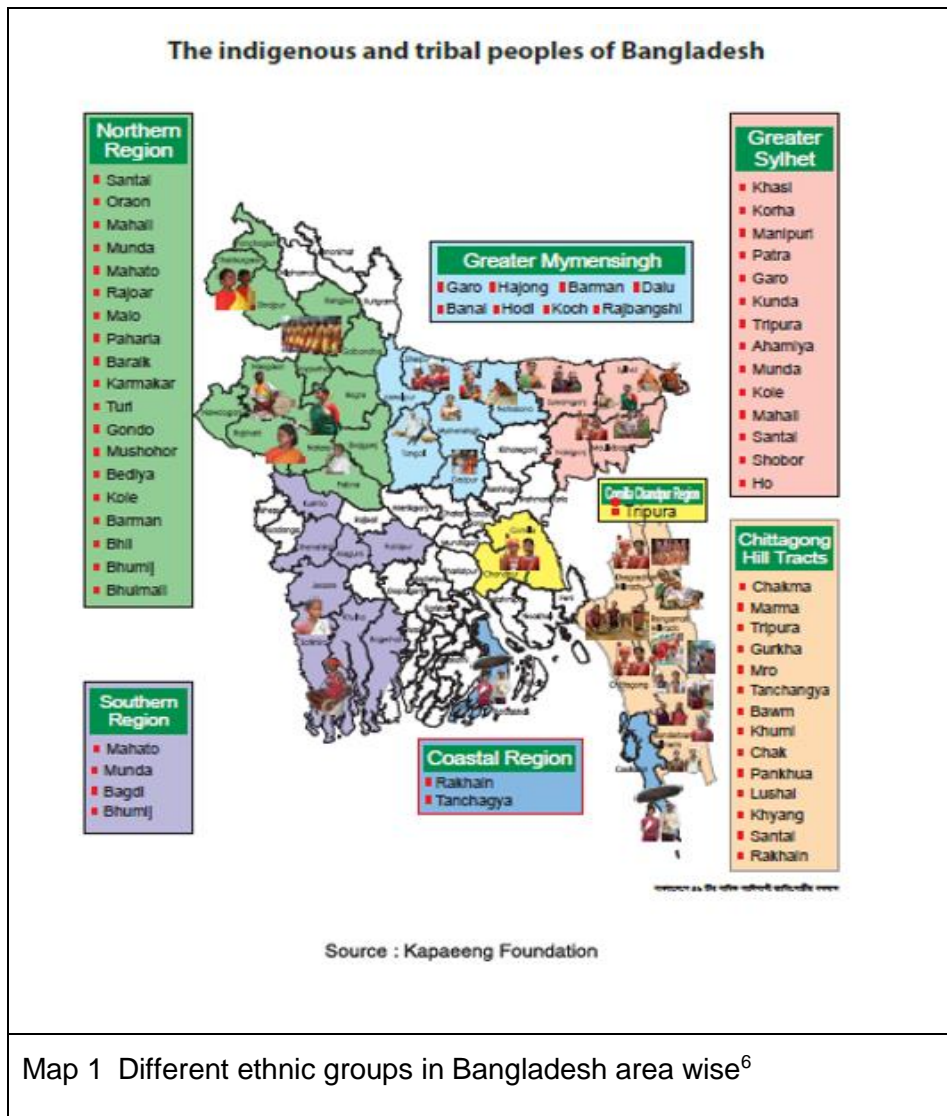
<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh Adivasi Forum: Promoting Indigenous Peoples Rights in Bangladesh

<https://www.raoen.org/2021/10/25/bangladesh-ativasi-forum-promoting-indigenous-peoples-rights-in-bangladesh/>

<sup>4</sup> SMALL ETHNIC & VULNERABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR (SEVCDF) Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED) Ministry of Education (MoE) June 2020

[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://techedu.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/techedu.portal.gov.bd/notices/76f1cdf1\\_7533\\_4460\\_8e41\\_274695b723d9/Small%20Ethnic%20and%20Vulnerable%20Community%20Development%20Framework%20\(SEVCDF\)%20\(1\).pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://techedu.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/techedu.portal.gov.bd/notices/76f1cdf1_7533_4460_8e41_274695b723d9/Small%20Ethnic%20and%20Vulnerable%20Community%20Development%20Framework%20(SEVCDF)%20(1).pdf)

community representatives claim the actual figure is considerably higher.<sup>5</sup> The majority of the ethnic minority people live in the plains of the north and southeast, as well as the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The distribution of different ethnic groups area wise is shown in the map next.



<sup>5</sup> Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Bangladesh*, July 2018.

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/4954ce6519.html> [accessed 28 May 2022]

<sup>6</sup> Building capacities on indigenous and tribal peoples' issues in Bangladesh

The Government has enacted the Small Ethnic Communities Cultural Institutions Act, 2010 to preserve and promote the culture, heritage, language, religious practices and traditional lifestyle of all ethnic communities living in both hill districts and plain lands. As a result, specialized Small Ethnic Communities Cultural Institutes are established in different locations to preserve and promote the culture, heritage and tradition of ethnic minorities.<sup>7</sup> The Prime Minister's Office has special projects/programmes for the betterment of other ethnic people of plain land.<sup>8</sup> Even then, when considered for 'Leave No one Behind' (LNOB), the government also recognizes that along with some other groups of people, ethnic communities and marginalized people might also be left behind.<sup>9</sup>

In a 2009 publication by ILO it is asserted that there are very few laws of the plains that directly focus upon indigenous peoples. Therefore, some of the core elements of ILO Convention 107, including consultation and participation of indigenous groups in governance, legislation and development, are either absent or extremely marginal in the plains. However, for scholars, academicians and government officials, awareness building in the society of small ethnic groups is considered the main challenge.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Organisation Act 2010

<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/policy-monitoring-platform/small-ethnic-groups-cultural#:~:text=The%20major%20objective%20of%20the,local%2C%20national%20and%20international%20level.>

<sup>8</sup> Bangladesh, Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) 2020, Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

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<sup>9</sup> Bangladesh, Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) 2020, Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://mole.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mole.portal.gov.bd/page/ac7088c7\_a211\_4905\_9ff3\_1e62af00c837/VNR\_2020.pdf

<sup>10</sup> Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Organisation Act 2010



the 'Anti-Discrimination Bill 2022' that is aimed at preventing all forms of discrimination in the light of the constitution, is placed in the parliament and is in the process of being examined.<sup>11</sup>

However, even after all these initiatives, COVID-19 pandemic posed unique additional challenges for all the people of Bangladesh. The government undertook many initiatives to address the multiple impacts of the pandemic on our society and economy and widened coverage of the social safety nets to protect the poor people who lost their jobs and income and faced food insecurity due to COVID-19.<sup>12,13</sup> It is recognized by the government and asserted by the honourable prime minister that the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 will undoubtedly impede the journey to 2030 Agenda.<sup>14</sup> The challenges in terms of livelihoods and food security was of major concern. However, a detailed comprehensive study on plain land ethnic minority for livelihoods and food security along with effectiveness of government services could not be found and might prove useful in generating data/ ideas/directions for undertaking necessary initiatives for future programming to improve livelihoods of plain land ethnic minorities towards Agenda 2030.

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<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/policy-monitoring-platform/small-ethnic-groups-cultural#:~:text=The%20major%20objective%20of%20the,local%2C%20national%20and%20international%20level.>

<sup>11</sup> Ensuring equal rights: Anti-Discrimination Bill 2022 placed in parliament

<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/rights/news/ensuring-equal-rights-anti-discrimination-bill-2022-placed-parliament-2998501>

<sup>12</sup> COVID-19 and its impact on the livelihood of indigenous peoples of Bangladesh

[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://aippnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Briefing-paper-on-COVID-19-impact-livelihood-IPs\\_KF.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://aippnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Briefing-paper-on-COVID-19-impact-livelihood-IPs_KF.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> A Rapid Assessment Report The impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Bangladesh

<https://www.iwgia.org/en/news-alerts/news-COVID-19/3814-kapaeeng-COVID-19-ra.html>

<sup>14</sup> Bangladesh, Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) 2020, Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mole.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mole.portal.gov.bd/page/ac7088c7\\_a211\\_4905\\_9ff3\\_1e62af00c837/VNR\\_2020.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://mole.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mole.portal.gov.bd/page/ac7088c7_a211_4905_9ff3_1e62af00c837/VNR_2020.pdf)

## Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY

### **A. Research Methods**

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to conduct this study with the recognition of the fact that the use of both qualitative and quantitative tools and data will lead to a comprehensive understanding on the issues under the specified objectives

### **B. Data Collection techniques**

Techniques for primary data collection included: 1. Questionnaire Survey, 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)/ micro-narratives and 3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

### **C. Detailed Sampling**

#### **Sampling for Questionnaire Survey**

Target Population: Households of plain land ethnic minority group will be taken from the following 5 districts: Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Satkhira.

#### Sample Size:

Sample size is determined using the following Cochran's Formula:

Cochran's Formula to determine sample size:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Here:

'e' is the desired level of precision (i.e. the margin of error), taken as 5% here

'p' is the (estimated) proportion of the population taken as 50% here

'q' is 1 – p

'z' value for confidence interval 95% is 1.96

Using the formula, the total sample size calculated was 384 which, after adding another 16 for non-response cases (4%), it became 400 (384+16). Sample was distributed area wise:

#### Sample distribution

Tools	Dinajpur	Sylhet	Mymensingh	Satkhira	Rajshahi	Total
Questionnaire	80	80	80	80	80	400
KII/ micro-narratives	4	4	4	4	4	20
FGD	1	1	1	1	1	5

The questionnaire piloted on around 10 respondents for finalization.

*Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) (2007, version 3)*: This scale was included in the questionnaire and was used to generate necessary data to measure extent of food insecurity. HFIAS Score (0-27) Sum of the frequency-of-occurrence during the past four weeks for the 9-food insecurity-related conditions, Sum frequency-of-occurrence question response code (Q1a + Q2a + Q3a + Q4a + Q5a + Q6a + Q7a + Q8a + Q9a).<sup>15</sup>

#### **Data Analysis mechanism**

Questionnaire survey data were directly put in KOBO software. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS and MS Excel.

For analysing of qualitative data, notes and recordings were transcribed and coded thematically.

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<sup>15</sup> Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) for Measurement of Food Access: Indicator Guide VERSION 3 August 2007  
chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.fantaproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/HFIAS\_ENG\_v3\_Aug07.pdf

## Chapter 4 Findings

This section is arranged objective wise. Relevant demographic and other data are also put objective wise. The findings generated using the qualitative tools are also arranged likewise to supplement the quantitative findings.

### Socio-economic status

Based on the responses of all the respondents, the following findings on socio-economic status were found. Poor was the status of above half of the respondents (55.75%) followed by Very Poor who constituted 33% of the total respondents before COVID-19. 87.25% remained in the same status. 9.25% of the respondents regressed from poor to very poor.

**Table 1. Change in socio-economic status based on before COVID-19 and present time**

		Present Status				
		Rich	Near rich	Medium	Poor	Very poor
Before	Rich	0.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.50%
	Near rich	0.00%	0.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Medium	0.00%	0.00%	8.00%	1.75%	0.50%
	Poor	0.00%	0.00%	0.25%	46.25%	9.25%
	Very poor	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.50%	32.50%

### **Box 1 Socio-economic status related findings**

- A total of 12% of the total respondent experienced negative shift for socio-economic status.
- Garo numbered double of Santal in their shift from Medium to poor.
- 0.50 % shift from rich to very poor was observed only among Khasia community.
- Munda community of constituted the highest percentage (2.75%) to show the shift from poor to very poor followed by Banerjee of Sylhet (2.25%), Santal (1.75%) and Garo of Mymensingh (1.5%).
- 0.75% experienced positive shift.
- While the shift from very poor to poor happened in Garo of Mymensingh; from poor to Middle shift was found in Santal of Dinajpur.

### **Top three income sources before and after COVID-19 in April 2022**

The following Table 2 shows the top three income source in the before COVID-19 situation as compared with the after COVID-19 situation. While 56% in the before COVID-19 situation were left with no more than 2 livelihoods options thus left with no alternative for the 3<sup>rd</sup> source of income, in the after COVID-19 situation, 28% did not have any other option but physical labour and 58% had no 3<sup>rd</sup> livelihoods option. Thus, it is evident that the ethnic communities in many cases had no 3<sup>rd</sup> option for livelihoods in both before and after COVID-19 situation percentages being 56% and 58% respectively. Also, the percentages of left with no option in the after COVID-19 situation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3 livelihoods options indicate that the ethnic minorities engage mostly in physical labour and need alternative income generating activities. The people of ethnic minority groups were mostly day labourers (63%). However, in the after COVID-19 situation, 54% had to shift to physical labour.

**Table 2. Shows the main sources of income before and after COVID-19**

Before COVID-19 N (%)	After COVID-19 N (%)
1. The top source Day labourer 250 (63%)	1. The top source Physical labour 215 (54%)
2. The second top source Farm products 104 (26%)	2. The second top source Left with no other option 111 (28%)
3. The third top source Left with no other option 223 (56%)	3. The third top source Left with no other option 231 (58%)

Table 3, shows the change in top 3 income sources for the respondent households. While in around 85% cases no change in livelihoods is evident, 1<sup>st</sup> source and 2<sup>nd</sup> sources of income are found to have changed in 16% and 20% cases respectively with 3<sup>rd</sup> option, being left with no livelihoods option, in more than 55% case before and after COVID-19.

**Table 3. Change in Income Source**

%	1 <sup>st</sup> Source	2 <sup>nd</sup> Source	3 <sup>rd</sup> Source
Changed	16.25%	20.00%	12.00%
Not Change	83.75%	80.00%	88.00%

Table 4 shows the hike in engagement of 18% children in earning. Again, 3% male and 3% female members lost their earning during COVID-19.

**Table 4. Change in number and percentage of household level earning members**

	Before	After	Change
Male	482	466	-3%
Female	307	297	-3%
Child	17	20	18%

### **Migration/ Internal Displacement for earning**

8% of the households constituted by 32 households had members who had to migrate for earning during COVID-19. Of the total households under this study, 368 that constituted 92% had no member who had to migrate to earn.

### **Changes in income and expenditure sources**

Table 5. shows the change in terms of income from different sources between before COVID-19 and present time (April 2022). The negative values of the income sources indicate decrease of amount of income different sources. While rent, gift (35%) shows the highest declined source of income; farm product (24%) indicates to be the second highest. The positive percentage for common property (25%) indicates the exploitation of the government common properties, i.e. fish collection from common water sources, wood and honey from the common forests, etc.

**Table 5. Change in terms of income from different sources**

<b>Income Source</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Expenditure Source</b>	<b>Change</b>
Safety Net	-3%	Food	4%
Payment & Salary	-6%	Clothing	2%
Rent, Gift	-35%	Education	1%
Farm Product	-24%	Health	6%
Common Property	25%	House/ Land	-5%
Enterprise & Business	-9%	Festival	6%
Physical Labor	-5%	Communication	12%
Govt. Allowance	9%	Others	-36%
Agricultural Product	2%		
Remittance	10%		
Others	-4%		
Fishing	-0.02%		

## **Box 2 Livelihoods related findings**

- 56% in the before COVID-19 situation were left with no more than 2 livelihoods options thus left with no alternative for the 3<sup>rd</sup> source of income.
- During COVID-19, the options for livelihoods reduced and additional 28% had no more than a single source of income that is physical labour.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> option, being left with no livelihoods option, prevails in more than 55% case before and after COVID-19.
- The ethnic minorities engage mostly in physical labour and need alternative income generating activities.
- Hike in engagement of 18% children in earning in the after COVID-19 situation. Again, 3% male and 3% female members lost their earning during COVID-19.
- 8% of the households had members who had to migrate for earning during COVID-19.
- Rent, gift (35%) shows the highest declined source of income; farm product (24%) being the second highest.
- Common property accounts for 25% increment; as exploitation of the government common properties, i.e. fish collection from common water sources, wood and honey from the common forests, etc. increased as source of income in the after COVID-19 situation in present time (April 2022).



## Food Security

Level of food sufficiency before COVID-19 and during the first lockdown for COVID-19 is shown in the following table.

**Table 6. Level of food sufficiency before COVID-19 and during the first lockdown**

Sufficient							
Before COVID-19	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	During COVID-19	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Male	174	320	263	Male	123	251	199
Female	173	324	245	Female	112	250	195
Child	198	309	264	Child	162	267	222
Insufficient							
Before COVID-19	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	During COVID-19	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Male	210	70	132	Male	257	123	183
Female	214	69	152	Female	272	124	192
Child	161	57	102	Child	193	88	140
No food							
Before COVID-19	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	During COVID-19	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Male	16	10	5	Male	20	26	18
Female	13	7	3	Female	16	26	13
Child	41	34	34	Child	45	45	38

Between before COVID-19 and during COVID-19 in terms of food sufficiency a negative shift is evident for all male, female and children for breakfast, lunch and dinner of the respondent households. The female of the households who had sufficient breakfast before COVID-19, 35% of them did not have sufficient breakfast during

COVID-19. For male members 29% did not have sufficient breakfast who used to have sufficient breakfast before COVID-19. During COVID-19, 24% male followed by 20% female experienced not to have sufficient dinner. During COVID-19 more than 20% of both male and female did not have sufficient lunch. The most shocking was the situation that around and above 15% of the household children did not have sufficient food during COVID-19.

The percentage of male, female and children in the category of insufficient food sharply increased during COVID-19. Female percentage for insufficient food in lunch saw the highest hike (80% followed by male 76% and children 54%). For dinner also the percentage of male (39%), female (26%) and children (37%) increased in the during COVID-19 situation compared to before COVID-19 situation.

**Table 7. Change in sufficiency of food between before COVID-19 and during COVID-19**

<b>Sufficient</b>	Change	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
	Male	-29%	-22%	-24%
	Female	-35%	-23%	-20%
	Child	-18%	-14%	-16%
<b>Insufficient</b>	Change	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
	Male	22%	76%	39%
	Female	27%	80%	26%
	Child	20%	54%	37%
<b>No Food</b>	Change	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
	Male	25%	160%	260%
	Female	23%	271%	333%
	Child	10%	32%	12%

The percentage of male, female and children for no food saw the increased the most. 160% increase of male, 271% increase of female and 32% increase of children for no lunch during COVID-19 was asserted by the respondents at the household level.

Increase of percentage of female was 333% and male was 260% who had no dinner. The severity of food insecurity as found in the study is shown in Table 7.

**Table 8. District wise level of food insecurity for the present day (April 2022)**

Score	Dinajpur	Sylhet	Satkhira	Mymensingh	Rajshahi	Grand Total	Scale
0	26%	16%	0%	25%	1%	14%	Low Insecurity
1	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	
2	4%	4%	3%	1%	0%	2%	
3	5%	0%	3%	0%	6%	3%	
4	1%	33%	4%	1%	5%	9%	
5	5%	3%	5%	3%	9%	5%	
6	4%	9%	1%	6%	5%	5%	
7	0%	0%	6%	1%	3%	2%	
8	5%	0%	3%	1%	9%	4%	
9	3%	0%	4%	4%	3%	3%	
10	11%	0%	6%	16%	3%	7%	Moderate Insecurity
11	6%	0%	5%	9%	4%	5%	
12	21%	1%	23%	10%	6%	12%	
13	1%	0%	13%	3%	9%	5%	
14	4%	0%	14%	1%	9%	6%	
15	0%	0%	4%	4%	8%	3%	
16	3%	1%	3%	4%	9%	4%	
17	1%	0%	3%	0%	4%	2%	
18	0%	1%	0%	1%	8%	2%	
19	0%	1%	3%	4%	0%	2%	High Insecurity
20	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	
21	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	
22	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%	
23	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	
24	0%	5%	0%	1%	0%	1%	
27	0%	23%	0%	0%	0%	5%	

**Table 9. Ethnic group wise analyses for food insecurity**

Score	Garos	Khasias	Mahalis	Mundas	Others	Santals	Uraos	Grand Total	Scale
0	25%	28%	20%	1%	5%	12%	0%	14%	Low Insecurity
1	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	
2	1%	0%	10%	2%	5%	2%	0%	2%	
3	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	6%	6%	3%	
4	1%	0%	20%	4%	65%	3%	6%	9%	
5	3%	0%	0%	5%	5%	8%	6%	5%	
6	6%	0%	10%	1%	19%	5%	0%	5%	
7	1%	0%	0%	6%	0%	2%	0%	2%	
8	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	8%	6%	4%	
9	4%	0%	10%	4%	0%	2%	0%	3%	
10	16%	0%	30%	7%	0%	5%	6%	7%	Moderate Insecurity
11	9%	0%	0%	5%	0%	5%	6%	5%	
12	10%	3%	0%	21%	0%	16%	6%	12%	
13	3%	0%	0%	12%	0%	5%	12%	5%	
14	1%	0%	0%	14%	0%	6%	6%	6%	
15	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%	3%	12%	3%	
16	4%	3%	0%	4%	0%	6%	0%	4%	
17	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%	2%	
18	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	29%	2%	
19	4%	3%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	High Insecurity
20	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
21	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	
22	0%	5%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	
23	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
24	1%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	
27	0%	45%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	

Table 9. shows the ethnic group wise percentage of respondents who are food insecure in the present time (in the past four weeks from the 1<sup>st</sup> week of April 2022). While food security was found in 14% of the total respondents, among the Khasia 28%, Garo 25% and Mahali 20% had food security. No one of Urao had food security. Moderate food insecurity was experiences among 77% Urao households followed by 69% Munda households. No household of other group had moderate food insecurity. Only 9% of Khasia households experienced moderate food insecurity. For other community it is around 50% or below. 66% of Khasia households experienced high food insecurity. For high insecurity Munda constitute 3% and Santal constitute 1% of the households. Khasia community for high food insecurity demand urgent attention and all the communities in general for moderate of low food insecurity.

### **Box 3 Food security related findings**

- A negative shift is evident for all male, female and children for breakfast, lunch and dinner of the respondent households between before COVID-19 and during lock down situation.
- Food insecurity was prevailing even in the before COVID-19 situation; however, the severity of food insecurity and especially, the case of no food during and after COVID-19 is too high.
- The percentage of male, female and children for no food saw the increased the most. 160% increase of male, 271% increase of female and 32% increase of children for no lunch during COVID-19 was asserted by the respondents at the household level.
- Increase of percentage of female was 333% and male was 260% who had no dinner.
- Among 71% of households of Satkhira followed by 60% in Rajshahi experienced moderate food insecurity.
- Prevalence of high food insecurity 23% was found in Sylhet only.
- Moderate food insecurity was experiences among 77% Urao households followed by 69% Munda households.
- 66% of Khasia households experienced high food insecurity.

## Coping Strategy

Table 10. shows the responses of top five coping strategies adopted by the households. The highest response was left with no option for coping. However, the respondent ethnic minority households in most cases took loan for consumption, and also from Microcredit NGOs and neighbour/ kins. They had to sell Livestock.

**Table 10. Top five coping strategies adopted**

Options	Respondents
Left with no option	618
Selling livestock	145
Taking food on loan for consumption	194
Taking loan from neighbor/kin	147
Taking loan from Microcredit NGO	173

## Loan

To explore further detailed analyses of sources loan, loan taking behaviour, preferred sources of loan, etc. had been performed.

**Table 11. District wise difference in loan taking behaviour before and during COVID-19**

Before COVID-19 Pandemic					During COVID-19 Pandemic				
District N	No	Yes	No%	Yes%	District N	No	Yes	No%	Yes%
Dinajpur	67	13	84%	16%	Dinajpur	38	42	48%	53%
Sylhet	32	48	40%	60%	Sylhet	26	54	33%	68%
Satkhira	36	44	45%	55%	Satkhira	25	55	31%	69%
Mymensingh	52	28	65%	35%	Mymensingh	27	53	34%	66%
Rajshahi	68	12	85%	15%	Rajshahi	32	48	40%	60%
Grand Total	255	145	64%	36%	Grand Total	148	252	37%	63%

The findings show that of the total 400 respondents, a total of 255 households, that is 64% of the households, had no loan before COVID-19; while the figure changes in the during COVID-19 situation that is 148 households (37%) only could survive without taking any loan. Likewise, loan taking was 36% before COVID-19 and increased up to 63% during COVID-19. The findings show 27% hike in loan taking behaviour among the respondents. In the before COVID-19 situation, Sylhet and Satkhira households were found to take loans more 60% and 55% respectively compared to other districts that were all below 50%. Strikingly, during the COVID-19 situation, above 60% of the households of all districts were found to have taken loan from different sources, except for Dinajpur where it is 53%. However, there had been 37% hike Dinajpur, 8% hike in Sylhet, 143% hike in Satkhira, 31% hike in Mymensingh and 45% hike in Rajshahi in loan taking behaviour among the respondents.

**Table 12. Ethnic group wise difference in loan taking behaviour before and during COVID-19**

Before COVID-19 Pandemic					During COVID-19 Pandemic				
Ethnic group	No	Yes	No %	Yes %	Ethnic group	No	Yes	No %	Yes %
Garo	52	28	65%	35%	Garo	27	53	34%	66%
Khasia	31	9	78%	23%	Khasia	26	14	65%	35%
Mahali	4	6	40%	60%	Mahali	5	5	50%	50%
Munda	39	45	46%	54%	Munda	27	57	32%	68%
Others	4	36	10%	90%	Others	0	40	0%	100%
Santal	109	20	84%	16%	Santal	52	77	40%	60%
Urao	16	1	94%	6%	Urao	8	9	47%	53%
Grand Total	255	145	64%	36%	Grand Total	148	252	37%	63%

Table 12, ethnic group wise distribution of percentage of household level loan taking behaviour. The group constituted of smaller groups who are fewer in number, minor among the minor, under the grouping of 'other', in the before COVID-19 situation constitute the biggest loan taker group with 90% households on loan followed by Mahali 60% and Munda 54%. Urao households were the minimum (6%) in loan taking in the

before COVID-19 situation. However, a hike in loan taking behaviour is evident among all the groups in the during COVID-19 situation. The shift towards hike in loan taking behaviour during COVID-19 among Urao was 47%, among Santal was 44%, among Garo was 31%, Munda was 14%, Khasia was 12%, Mahali was 10% and among other was 10% in a descending order.

**Table 13. District wise different sources of loan availed**

District	Business man	Shopkeeper /dealer	Money lender	Kin	Neighbor	Bank	Friends	Micro credit NGO	Other source
Dinajpur	19%	3%	25%	9%	11%	0%	4%	20%	1%
Sylhet	1%	61%	0%	45%	8%	0%	5%	55%	0%
Satkhira	23%	58%	19%	8%	0%	3%	0%	78%	5%
Mymensingh	6%	55%	14%	18%	15%	5%	8%	38%	0%
Rajshahi	3%	5%	15%	21%	6%	1%	0%	43%	1%

While different source of loans was considered district wise, loan from Microcredit NGOs for Satkhira, 78%, was found to be the most availed followed by loan from shopkeeper/ dealer for Sylhet and Satkhira, 61% and 58% respectively.

In all the districts, loan from Microcredit NGOs had been found as the common source of loan. However, in Sylhet, Satkhira and Mymensingh, loan from shopkeeper/ dealer was very high 61%, 58% and 55% respectively. Such loans mostly are for facing food crises or insecurity. The qualitative data from the field also confirm the purpose of such loans as food insecurity. Again, the microcredit loan was also used mostly to address food insecurity.

For different ethnic group, while sources of loan are analyzed, all (100%) the households of other category (the group constituted of smaller groups who are fewer in number, minor among the minor) are found to have taken from microcredit NGOs. Again, 92% of these other category households also took loan from shopkeeper/ dealer. More than half of the respondents of Munda and Garo had to take loan from the shopkeeper/ dealer to face food insecurity during COVID-19. 30% households of both Khasia and Mahali groups availed loan from shopkeeper/ dealer. Interestingly, fewer Santal households availed loan than other groups. While varieties of sources of loan



was exploited by different groups, only 5% Garo household took loan from bank followed by 2% Munda households.

**Table 14. Ethnic group wise different sources of loan availed**

Ethnic Group	Business man	Shopkeeper /dealer	Money lender	Kin	Neighbor	Bank	Friends	Microcredit NGO	Other source
Garo	6%	55%	14%	18%	15%	5%	8%	38%	0%
Khasia	3%	30%	0%	28%	8%	0%	0%	10%	0%
Mahali	0%	30%	10%	10%	30%	0%	20%	40%	0%
Munda	25%	56%	20%	7%	0%	2%	0%	71%	5%
Others	0%	92%	0%	65%	5%	0%	8%	100%	0%
Santal	6%	2%	14%	6%	3%	0%	2%	22%	2%
Urao	0%	0%	6%	18%	0%	0%	0%	47%	0%

**Box 4 Coping strategy related findings**

- The highest response was 'left with no option for coping'.
- Loan taking was 36% before COVID-19 and increased up to 63% during COVID-19. Thus, the findings show 27% hike in loan taking behaviour among the respondents.
- In most cases they took loan for consumption, and also from Microcredit NGOs and neighbour/ kins.
- The last coping strategy was to sell Livestock.
- The findings show 27% hike in loan taking behaviour among the respondents during COVID-19.
- In the before COVID-19 situation, the group named 'other' (constituted of smaller groups who are fewer in number, minor among the minor), constitutes the biggest loan taker group with 90% households on loan followed by Mahali 60% and Munda 54%.
- A hike in loan taking behaviour during COVID-19 among Urao was 47%, among Santal was 44%, among Garo was 31%.

- Compared to other areas, Sylhet and Satkhira households were found to have higher tendency to take loans, 60% and 55% respectively.
- In all the districts, loan from Microcredit NGOs had been found as the common source of loan.
- Loan from Microcredit NGOs for Satkhira, 78%, was found to be the most availed followed by loan from shopkeeper/ dealer for Sylhet and Satkhira, 61% and 58% respectively.
- In Sylhet, Satkhira and Mymensingh, loan from shopkeeper/ dealer was very high 61%, 58% and 55% respectively.
- Loans were mostly taken to address food crises or insecurity.
- 100% of the 'Other' group (the group constituted of smaller groups who are fewer in number) are found to have taken from microcredit NGOs. 92% of the same category households also took loan from shopkeeper/ dealer.
- More than half of the respondents of Munda and Garo had to take loan from the shopkeeper/ dealer to face food insecurity during COVID-19. 30% households of both Khasia and Mahali groups availed loan from shopkeeper/ dealer.

## Government Support

**Table 15. Sources of supports received during COVID-19**

Total N	Govt	Pvt	Bank	NGO	Neighbors
Not applicable	295	397	397	242	288
Money	23	2	0	9	32
Food	85	0	0	51	63
Loan	3	1	3	112	48
Work	2	1	0	0	0
Other	2	0	0	13	0

Table 15 shows that of the total 400 households, 397 did not receive any support from either any private agency/ person or bank. 295, 288 and 242 households did not receive from government, neighbors or NGOs respectively. Food support was received from the government by 85 households followed by money in 23 households. NGO food and loan was received by 51 and 112 households respectively. Neighbors had been the source of food support for 63 households. 48 households received loan from neighbor and also 32 households received money support from neighbors.

The following table shows the findings about the receiving percentage of different government safety net and other services and the level of satisfaction of the recipient households.

While the most availed service was vaccination, taken by 94% of the households, 87% availed Registration (birth, death, voter and marriage) service. Above 65% availed health and family planning related services. Of the recipients of food for work and VGD/ VGF, 77% and 67% were dissatisfied followed by 43% with relief, 33% with educational stipend and 32% with elderly allowance.

**Table 16. Receiving rate of government safety net and other services and satisfaction level of the recipient households**

Total %	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Receiving Rate
Educational stipend	33%	22%	45%	32%
Health services	13%	42%	45%	67%
Family planning related	3%	57%	40%	66%
Elderly allowance	32%	40%	28%	20%
Registration (birth, death, voter and marriage)	1%	71%	28%	87%
Relief	43%	17%	40%	40%
VGD/ VGF	61%	17%	22%	31%
Food for work	77%	4%	19%	21%
Vaccination	2%	86%	12%	94%

**Table 17. Level of usefulness, sustainability of benefits and appropriateness of the government services/support**

Usefulness of government service/ support	Somewhat useful	Not at all useful	Very useful
	67.75%	23.25%	9.00%
Sustainability of benefits of service/ support	Somewhat correct	Not at all correct	Completely correct
	60.50%	36.75%	2.75%
Appropriateness of the Received service (the most necessary)/ support	Somewhat correct	Not at all correct	Completely correct
	48.00%	51.00%	1.00%

Percentage around the medium category 'somewhat' for usefulness, sustainability of benefits and appropriateness of the received service/ support are 67.75%, 60.50% and

48% respectively. However, the most unwanted perceptions are the negative ‘not at all’ perceptions. For appropriateness of the received service or support, in other words, the most necessary service or support, more than half of the recipients, 51%, were completely negative. Such negative perception for sustainability of benefits and usefulness were 36.75% and 23.25% respectively. Unfortunately, it must be noted that no percentage for positive perception ‘very useful/ completely correct’ exceeded 10%.

**Table 18. Services and supports from Union Parisad/ Upazial Parisad/ UNO Office**

Total %	Upazila	Union	N/A
Had you been to the Union Parisad / Upazila Office during COVID-19?	9%	59%	32%
Did the Union Parisad / Upazila take any initiative to improve the quality of services during COVID-19?	26%	49%	25%
Does the Union Parisad / Upazila work to prevent violence against women?	21%	62%	17%
Does the Union Parisad / Upazila encourage NGO and other similar type of activities?	23%	54%	22%
Does the Union Parisad / Upazila work to protect your rights (access to government, school, health, safety net, etc. services, and other services)?	17%	56%	27%
Does the Union Parisad / Upazila work to maintain law and order situation and to control terrorism?	25%	64%	11%
Did you take any service from the Union Parisad / Upazila during COVID-19?	4%	53%	43%
Did the Union Parisad / Upazila ensure inclusion of the ethnic people (to government, school, health, safety net, etc. services, and other services) during COVID-19?	10%	53%	37%
Does the Union / Upazila office inspire you to send your children to the school?	10%	50%	39%
Does the Union Parisad / Upazila supervise the activities of the primary schools?	5%	45%	50%
Does the Union Parisad / Upazila have any service system of registration for birth, death, voter, and marriage?	17%	78%	5%

No member of 32% of the respondent households went to the Union Parisad / Upazila Office during COVID-19. Around 50% to 80% households were informed about union Parisad activities, and availed services. However, for the respondents, Upazila is less

known and availed in most cases. Members of 50% households are unaware of whether the Union Parishad / Upazila supervise the activities of the primary schools; either they have no children or they don't know. 43% households did not take any service from the Union Parishad / Upazila during COVID-19.

**Table 19. Level of availability, sufficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, appropriateness and deprivation for government services**

Issues	Not at all	Partially	Fully
Could you avail government services/ facility/ safety net from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office as needed during COVID-19?	47%	53%	1%
Was/ were the government services/ facilities/ safety nets), availed from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office sufficient to meet your need during COVID-19?	48%	51%	1%
Did the Government services/ facility/ safety net, availed from Union/ Upazila Parishad, / UNO office save you during COVID-19?	45%	55%	1%
Did the benefits of government services/ facility/ safety net, availed from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office last long?	47%	52%	1%
Did you get the most needed support through the government services/ facility/ safety net availed from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office?	52%	47%	1%
Did you find any partiality/ deprivation conducted by Union Parishad chairman or members in providing rightful government services?	54%	38%	9%
Did you find any partiality/ deprivation conducted by Upazila Parishad chairman or members in providing rightful government services?	55%	37%	8%
Did you find any partiality/ deprivation conducted by UNO office in providing rightful government services?	55%	37%	8%

54%/55% claimed no partiality/ deprivation was conducted by Union Parishad chairman or members/ Upazila Parishad chairman or members/ UNO office in providing rightful government services; 37%/38% claimed partial and 8%/9% claimed to have experienced partiality/ deprivation in getting rightful government services.

Of the respondent households, 47% could not avail any government services/ facility/ safety net from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office as needed during COVID-19. For 48% of those who received the government services/ facilities/ safety nets availed from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office were not at all sufficient to meet their need during COVID-19. Government services/ facility/ safety net, availed from Union/ Upazila Parishad, / UNO office as perceived by 45% of the recipients, did not save them during COVID-19. The benefits of government services/ facility/ safety net, availed from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office 47% opined that will not last long. Of the recipients, 52% claimed not to have availed the most needed support through the government services/ facility/ safety net.

#### **Box 5 Government support and service related findings**

- Of the total 400 households, 397 did not receive any support from either any private agency/ person or bank. 295, 288 and 242 households did not receive from government, neighbors or NGOs respectively.
- NGOs, neighbor and Government had been the only sources of support during COVID-19.
- While the most availed service was vaccination, taken by 94% of the households, 87% availed Registration (birth, death, voter and marriage) service; the rates of satisfaction also matches as are 86% and 71% respectively.
- Of the recipients of food for work and VGD/ VGF, 77% and 67% were dissatisfied followed by 43% with relief, 33% with educational stipend and 32% with elderly allowance.
- The level of satisfaction for received government services and supports were somewhat average.
- For appropriateness of the received service or support, in other words, the most necessary service or support, more than half of the recipients, 51%,

were completely negative. Such negative perception for sustainability of benefits and usefulness were 36.75% and 23.25% respectively.

- Unfortunately, it must be noted that percentages for usefulness, sustainability of benefits and appropriateness/ most necessary service or support was received or not, positive responses i.e. very useful/ completely correct did not exceeded 10%.
- No member of 32% of the respondent households went to the Union Parisad / Upazila Office during COVID-19. 43% households did not take any service from the Union Parisad / Upazila during COVID-19.
- For the respondents, Upazila is less known and availed in most cases.
- Members of 50% households are unaware of whether the Union Parisad / Upazila supervise the activities of the primary schools; either they have no children or they don't know.
- 54%/55% claimed no partiality/ deprivation was conducted by Union Parisad chairman or members/ Upazila Parisad chairman or members/ UNO office in providing rightful government services; 37%/38% claimed partial and 8%/9% claimed to have experienced partiality/ deprivation in getting rightful government services.
- Of the respondent households, 47% could not avail any government services/ facility/ safety net from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office as needed during COVID-19. In general, near 50% of the recipients expressed negative opinion about the government services/ facility/ safety net availed/ provided from Union/ Upazila Parishad/ UNO office.



## Chapter 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The present study was conducted 1. to understand and analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods and food security of plain land ethnic minority communities; to identify coping mechanisms adopted by plain land ethnic minority groups to address the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on livelihoods and food security; and to collect and generate evidence on targeting and inclusion of government social safety net programmes, its effectiveness, and impact on the marginalized plain land ethnic minority population during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh.

With the findings, the purpose is to brief the government and other stakeholders and advocate providing data/ ideas/directions for undertaking necessary initiatives for future programming to improve livelihoods of plain land ethnic minorities towards Agenda 2030.

Quantitative data was accumulated on majority plain land ethnic minority groups such as - Santal, Garo, Urao, Munda, Mahali, and other ethnic minority groups from different parts of the country to have evidence/data to address the objectives. Along with the quantitative findings, findings generated through the Micro-narratives/FGDs and KIIs are analysed to derive recommendations. All the findings both from quantitative and qualitative analysed data collectively will allow to undertake advocacy with the Government of Bangladesh and relevant stakeholders to achieve SDG's mandate.

## Recommendations

- **Protect cultural identity; help remove cultural ills/ practices that are obstacles towards development:** Ethnic minority groups have some unique cultural practices. While the Government has 1. enacted the Small Ethnic Communities Cultural Institutions Act, 2010 to preserve and promote the culture, heritage, language, religious practices and traditional lifestyle of all ethnic communities; 2. Established, in different locations, specialized Small Ethnic Communities Cultural Institutes; 3. special projects/programmes for the betterment of other ethnic people of plain land in the Prime Minister's Office; the damaging effects of culturally practiced homemade beverages are the cultural barrier as recognized and asserted by some of them, mostly female of some of the ethnic minority groups.
- **Help remove culturally practiced behavioural obstacles:** They feel shy to go to the Union Parishad chairman and Upazila offices for the available services for themselves in some areas. The possible interventions as could be revealed from the field include the following. 1. In some other areas, through NGO interventions, the awareness of the community members was found to have increased. In some other areas; 2. 1/ 2 of the community members who have better networks and less mental barrier or shyness, to access and avail government supports and services, were found to be very effective in ensuring those supports and services for other members of his/ her group; 3. in some FGDs, they requested for a system of information dissemination at their community level; 4. in some areas their meeting places or churches were suggested to be used as the places for information dissemination; 5. in many areas, as they rarely go out of their community, they are unaware of the possible services that are disseminated in the online platforms, thus to end such digital divide, they suggested not only availability of the information but also especial facility to ensure accessibility to those information within their own community, if possible. They suggested to arrange community level training on using online information for services.
- **Aware and educate to engage:** Their lack of awareness, knowledge and access to online information seemed as an obstacle to getting the especial

services for them. Also, to make information and services available and accessible, to end digital divide, to aware, educate and get them engaged, Special Digital Centres (SDCs) can be established. While the scholars, academicians and government officials considered awareness building in the society of small ethnic groups to be the main challenge, success of SDCs in other special locations for special services, trainings, and for building awareness is a possible opportunity in the context of ethnic minority groups.

- **Work opportunity can only end the vulnerability:** They are eager to work and expressed need of training for alternative income generating activities (cattle rearing, handicrafts, etc.). Also, in some areas, they found working in Dhaka was helpful for improving their situation; NGOs may help identifying the interested liaison person and possible IGAs for providing training and increasing livelihoods options; coordination among government departments, NGOs, private actors/ companies and relevant stakeholders may bring all together under the umbrella of development. Restarting quota system for jobs for the youth of ethnic groups were echoed in most communities. Participation of members of ethnic groups can ensure timely, necessary, appropriate, sustainable intervention, service, supports for them.
- **Institutional challenge:** Lack of authentic nationwide desegregated data of the ethnic minority groups could ensure appropriate distribution and necessary monitoring and evaluation of all the government, NGO and others supports and services. Also, issues mentioned under the points, 'Help remove culturally practiced behavioural obstacles' and 'Aware and educate to engage' are relevant to this challenge for solution.
- **More vulnerable group among the vulnerable:** Disable people were found to receive allowance in many cases. However, as they constitute more vulnerable within the vulnerable ethnic minorities, especial trainings and income generating activities could empower them and could have reduced vulnerability. Their vulnerability must be addressed with especial services and supports.
- **Livelihoods challenges lead to other vulnerabilities:** In general, the people of the ethnic groups in the remote areas are agricultural day labourers or day

labourers for the available work in their areas. Those who have personal land face irrigation problem. Who work as day labourers experience wage discrimination. The agricultural day labourers have around 2-2.5 months of work in a year. Rest of the time they manage by Physical labour or by selling cattle mostly. They need alternative income generating activities. The cattle support of the government was appreciated by some. Also, the stipend for education was claimed as useful by some. They were found to receive government supports through old age allowance, disable allowance, widow allowance, etc. However, due to cultural behavioural pattern of shyness, they are less aware, lack information and less engaged, face ignorance, discrimination and are left out behind. Due to lack of income opportunities, they face food insecurity, malnourishment, take loan, sell cattle, try to survive but continue to be in the vicious cycle of poverty.

- **Additional challenge for COVID-19:** Most of them avail health services from the Upazila health complex and reported to receive vaccinated for COVID-19. COVID-19 posed challenge to every citizen of the country. However, impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods was not severe for those who were agricultural day labourers. However, other day labourers faced difficulty as they had to stay inside home and did not get work. Those who had job in the cities and in informal or semi-formal settings experienced challenge as they lost job and had to go back in their village homes and had been left with no income option for a very long period of around 14 months. Most of them started getting job again around 18 months of the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic. Food insecurity was already prevailing among the ethnic minority households even in the before COVID-19 context. However, food insecurity was extreme for most of the ethnic minority households during and continued even in the after COVID-19 (present time. April, 2022) situation.