COVID-19 induced Lockdown – How is the Hinterland Coping?

A collaborative study by:
PRADAN, Action for Social Advancement, BAIF, Transform Rural India Foundation, Grameen Sahara, SAATHI-UP and The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India)

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Sincere gratitude

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• Special thanks, to Sridhar Anantha, for assisting the study with his expertize of the KoBo Toolbox for design of instrument, training and back-stopping and a group of friends who translated the questions in multiple languages.
Objective of the study

• A rapid assessment of the effect of the COVID-19 induced lockdown on the rural households.

• What are the various coping mechanisms undertaken by the rural households?

• A consortium of civil society partners undertook a rapid assessment.

• Assessment focused on:
  • Food security,
  • Change in expenditure pattern,
  • Readiness for the forthcoming Kharif season,
  • Drudgery faced by the women in the household,
  • Asset sales.
Approach to the study

- Spread – Geographical Coverage as much as possible – From Kamrup to Dang
- Speed – Quick turnaround time – 27th April till 2nd May
- Simplicity – Compatibility with hand held devices – use of open-access tool (Kobo) – closed ended responses – covering *must ask*
Geographical spread

- 5162 Households, 12 States, 47 Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattisgarh</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odisha</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Districts</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key attributes of surveyed households

- In most of the surveyed families migrant members are yet to return
- More than a quarter of the surveyed households reported dependent members (young children, senior citizens, pregnant women, lactating mother)
Workload within the household

- Already an increase in drudgery among the women members in the households with returnee migrants.
- Only few households have returnee migrants – significant chunk are now returning/ will return

![Bar chart showing the percentage of households with more trips to fetch water, more time to fetch water, increase in demand for fuelwood, and more time in collecting fuelwood for those with and without returnee migrants.]
Dependence on existing food stock

- More than 1/3rd did not have any surplus from last Kharif.
- More than half could not depend on rabi produce for food.
- Around 1/3rd of the respondent reported that Kharif stock would only last till May end.
- Food provision through PDS and cultivating food crop in Kharif 2020 – important.

![Bar chart showing percentage of households depending on food grains stocked from kharif last year and have some food from Rabi](chart1)

![Bar chart showing percentage of households with no surplus from Apr-20 to Dec-20](chart2)
Readiness for *Kharif 2020*

- More than 2/3rd of the respondents do not have seeds for the upcoming Kharif
- Less than 20% have KCC.
- Less than half of the respondents were of the view that they would get crop loans
- **Provision of seeds and credit for the upcoming Kharif season - important**

![Bar chart showing readiness for Kharif 2020](chart.png)
Reduced income from key livelihood activities

- Lockdown and rumors have adversely affected income
- 23% households sell milk, out of which half have reported reduction in sales
- 56% households are in poultry, out of which more than 40% reported reduction in sales
Coping: Immediate adjustments for food security

- More than half of the households are eating fewer items and less number of times
- Nearly a quarter is depending on borrowing from others in the village
- PDS working for the majority – not reaching to 1/6th of the eligible households

[Graph showing the percentage of households depending on different activities for food]

- Reduction in items in meal (n=5139)
- Reduction in number of meals (n=5133)
- Borrowed food grains in village (n=5130)
- People in the village gave free food (n=5017)
- Received food items through PDS (n=5074)
- Received Take Home Ration (THR) (n=4534)
- Depending on village market for food (n=5140)
Coping: Postponing discretionary expenses

- Nearly 1/3rd of the respondents reported that there is possibility that children will drop-out of schools
- Postponement and downscaling of ceremonies and purchases reported by nearly a quarter of households

![Bar chart showing the percentage of households postponing different activities.]

- Children dropout possibility (n=4416) 29%
- Postpone ceremony (n=2528) 32%
- Cut down guest list (n=2323) 23%
- Postpone agricultural tool purchase (n=3373) 28%
Coping: Borrowing/mortgaging of assets

- At least 1/5th of the families depended on family networks for borrowing
- Borrowing from moneylender also reported
- Indebtedness rising?
- Mortgage of household items and sale of liquid assets already taking place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borrowed from money lender (n=5123)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowed from extended family at 0% (n=5128)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgaged household items (n=5135)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold goat/sheep/duck/hen to arrange money (n=4199)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coping: Sale of productive assets

- Has implication on the long term economic base of the household
- Expected to manifests when a shock/stress has a prolonged/intense effect.
- Though less, but around (3-5)% of the respondents reported asset sales

![Chart showing percentage of households selling various assets]

- Sold agricultural tool (n=3681) - 3%
- Sold dry cattle (n=3702) - 6%
- Sold in-milk cattle (n=3654) - 3%
- Mortgage land (n=4602) - 5%
- Sold land (n=4604) - 3%
To summarize (1/2)

- Households have depended on Kharif stock more than Rabi – but that stock is now depleting fast.

- Households are coping with the shock by eating less food and lesser number of times and with large dependence on PDS

- Need for increased food support through PDS and promotion for food crop cultivation in Kharif

- Preparedness for Kharif 2020 is low - need for public support in terms of seed provision and credit for Kharif 2020.

- Large chunk of migrants yet to return – but already the increased workload enhances the drudgery faced by the women.
To summarize (2/2)

- Lockdown and rumors have indeed adversely affected income – dairy and poultry

- Coping mechanisms mostly clustered around change in food habits and reduction in expenditures

- Borrowing is taking place – indebtedness might increase if the effect of shock prevails

- Asset sales still low - but already reported by a small fraction of respondents

- Gives a snapshot – to understand how the hinterland is getting affected progressively – more rounds will be needed.