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>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Districts: 47
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
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.
Readiness for *Kharif* 2020

- More than $\frac{2}{3}$rd 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% of Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have seeds for kharif (n=4702)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Kisan credit card (n=4579)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will get crop loans (n=4204)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in items in meal (n=5139)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in number of meals (n=5133)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowed food grains in village (n=5130)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in the village gave free food (n=5017)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received food items through PDS (n=5074)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Take Home Ration (THR) (n=4534)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on village market for food (n=5140)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coping: Postponing discretionary expenses

- Nearly 1/3\textsuperscript{rd} 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 various expenses.](chart.png)
Coping: Borrowing/mortgaging of assets

- At least $\frac{1}{5}$th 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

![Bar chart showing the percentage of households that borrowed or mortgaged assets](chart.png)

- Borrowed from money lender ($n=5123$): 16%
- Borrowed from extended family at 0% ($n=5128$): 22%
- Mortgaged household items ($n=5135$): 14%
- Sold goat/sheep/duck/hen to arrange money ($n=4199$): 22%
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 asset sales](chart.png)

- Sold agri. Tool (n=3681)
- Sold dry cattle (n=3702)
- Sold in-milk cattle (n=3654)
- Mortgage land (n=4602)
- Sold land (n=4604)
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.