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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- To all the key personnel, especially field personnel of the partner organizations for their extraordinary efforts to ensure data collection within an extremely tight timeline

- Special thanks, to Sridhar Anantha, for assisting the study with his expertise of the KoBo Toolbox for design of instrument, training and back-stopping.
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 etc.
Geographical spread

- 5162 Households, 12 States, 47 Districts
- Data collection took place between 28th April and 2nd May

<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 yet to return
- More than a quarter of the surveyed households reported dependent members (young children, senior citizens, pregnant women, lactating mother)

![Bar chart showing percentages of households]

- Returning migrants members (n=4250): 17%
- Pregnant/lactating mother/children below 6 (n=4842): 37%
- Senior citizens/persons with disability/bedridden patients (n=4921): 28%
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 workload changes](chart.png)

- More trips to fetch water
- More time to fetch water
- Increase in demand for fuelwood
- More time in collecting fuelwood

% of Households

- Returned migrant
- No returned migrant
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 $\frac{1}{3}$ 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]

- **Have seeds for kharif** (n=4702) - 31%
- **Have Kisan credit card** (n=4579) - 19%
- **Will get crop loans** (n=4204) - 40%
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

![Bar chart showing reduction in milk sales and sell of poultry](image)
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</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in number of meals</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowed food grains in village</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in the village gave free food</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received food items through PDS</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Take Home Ration (THR)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on village market for food</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: [VAF Sambodhi](#)
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
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
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset Type</th>
<th>Percentage of Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sold agri. Tool</td>
<td>3 (n=3681)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold dry cattle</td>
<td>6 (n=3702)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold in-milk cattle</td>
<td>3 (n=3654)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage land</td>
<td>5 (n=4602)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold land</td>
<td>3 (n=4604)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To summarize (1/2)

- Households have depended on Kharif stock more than Rabi – but that stock is now dwindling
- Households are coping with the shock by eating less food and lesser number of times and with large dependence on PDS
- Need for 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.