Impact of COVID-19 on Labour Market and Migration in Bangladesh

Results from SANEM's Nationwide Employment Survey Conducted in January-February 2021

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August 2022

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Acronyms and Abbreviation

8FYP	*8th Five Year Plan*
BBS	*Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics*
COVID-19	*Corona Virus Diseases 2019*
GCC	*Gulf Cooperation Council*
GDP	*Gross Domestic Product*
GED	*General Economic Division*
GoB	*Government of Bangladesh*
IMF	*International Monetary Fund*
MSMEs	*Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises*
PIE	*Poverty, Income, and Employment*
PSUs	*Primary Sampling Units*
RMG	*Ready-Made Garment*
SANEM	*South Asian Network on Economic Modeling*
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

Executive Summary

Despite the fact that COVID-19 was primarily a health risk, the lockdown that was imposed as a precaution to contain the spread of the virus caused severe economic crises all over the world. The situation was no different for Bangladesh. Many people in Bangladesh, especially female workers, lost their jobs permanently or temporarily and saw significant wage cuts as a result. In addition, many migrant workers were dismissed and sent back to Bangladesh, forcing potential migrants to postpone their travel plans. This exacerbated the current labour market situation in Bangladesh. Despite the pandemic's terrible impacts, the economy was gradually recovering. In order to foster inclusive economic growth in line with the SDG agenda, the 8th Five Year Plan (8FYP), and the Government of Bangladesh's Vision 2021, it is crucial to understand the dynamics of the labour market in the pre-and post-COVID-19 periods.

In light of this, the main goal of the study is to look into the dynamics of the labour market in both the pre-COVID and post-COVID contexts. The study identifies the problems that domestic and international migrant workers confront and places a special emphasis on internal and external migration. The study also makes an effort to investigate the potential course of the economy's recovery from the income shocks caused by COVID-19. This research was based on two surveys, one conducted in 2018 and the other in 2021.

In 2018, SANEM conducted a nationally representative survey of 10,500 households in cooperation with the General Economic Division (GED), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Bangladesh. The sample was collected using 500 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs), dispersed among the 64 districts and all eight divisions. The 2018 survey covered migration, remittances, and other fundamental household variables in addition to poverty, income, and employment (PIE). In 2021, the study took a slightly different approach to survey both non-migrant and migrant households. The study approached all migrant households from the household survey of 2018. Nonetheless, for the non-migrant households, the study followed the same sampling framework in line with the 2018 survey.

Data was collected over the phone between January-February 2021. Household heads or other members of the same households who had previously participated in the survey were questioned. The survey included separate sections for non-migrants and migrants. Questions on employment and income were incorporated for the non-migrant section (households with no migrant member). Moreover, the survey had separate sections for migrant households (households with migrant members) as well as for those households where we have members who are interested to migrate (‘aspiring’). To capture the overall situation of work and income between pre-Covid and post-Covid periods, data on respondents’ income, employment, migration, remittances, and experiences with COVID-19 were collected. A total of 2845 non-migrants, 230 internal migrants, and 273 international migrants were surveyed. The survey had a 19% non-response rate (due to network issues, language barriers, wrong numbers, etc.) and a 5% decline rate.

The survey shows that from March to December 2020, both self-employed and wage-employed were adversely affected by the pandemic but not equally. Of the self-employed workers, most faced a decrease in production, sales or profits, followed by more than half facing temporary business closure. On the other hand, more than half the wage employed workers experienced a decrease in salary among others. When it comes to gender, it can be inferred that women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic as they are highly engaged in health and care work. In the case of location, people in rural areas faced the highest decrease in income. The respondents in the Sylhet division encountered the most decrease in income followed by Barisal and Mymensingh. Among the major sectors, respondents in the transportation sector faced the highest decrease in income followed by construction and manufacturing (RMG). Due to the income shocks, unemployment/job loss rose significantly across Bangladesh during March-December 2020. The urban region faced the highest loss of jobs. At the division level, Barisal experienced the highest job loss and Khulna experienced the lowest job loss. During the same time period, decreased production/sales/profit was also observed. Among the major sectors, respondents in the wholesale and retail trade sector faced the most decrease in production, sales, and profit followed by the transportation sector, and the hotel and restaurant sector. The survey also covers the dynamics of income for both self-employed and wage employed by major sectors between December 2019 and December 2020, showing the self-employed workers in the hotel and restaurant sector faced the highest drop in income, while wage employed in the construction and the transportation experienced the highest drop in income.

The survey also incorporates the recovery scenarios of the labour market from the COVID-19 induced income shocks. Among the wage employed, a higher percentage (39.3%) of workers in wholesale and retail trade, as well as construction (34.3%), said that their income declined between March and December 2020, but that they already returned to the December 2019 income level. A greater percentage of self-employed respondents in health and social work (51.5%), the wholesale and retail sector (50.2%) and the manufacturing sector (44.6%) among others reported a reduction in income from March to December 2020, albeit they already returned to pre-COVID level income (income in December 2019).

Moreover, Dhaka-based employment was severely affected. More than half of the wage employed experienced a decrease in their income during March-December 2020, followed by permanent job loss, and change in professions among others. In contrast, most of the self-employed faced a reduction in production, sales or profit, followed by temporary business closure among others. When looking at income recovery, 30.1% of self-employed people in Dhaka said that their income decreased but recovered, as opposed to 42.5% of wage-employed. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-employed people were more severely affected by the pandemic than those who worked for wages.

Bangladeshi migrants are employed in many countries. The largest percentage of the international migrant workers are employed in Saudi Arabia, followed by Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates among others. On the other hand, internal migrants are mostly employed in Dhaka followed by Gazipur and Narayanganj among others. The sample contains 230 internal migrants, out of which 66.5% are working in Dhaka, 20% work in RMG and 13.5% work in wholesale and retail trade. However, 49% of surveyed migrants returned to their village due to multiple reasons such as losing employment, a decrease in salary, or could not to afford expenses. From March-December 2020, 14% of internal migrants lost jobs. Those who lost jobs were mostly employed in craft-related trade.

Out of the 273 international migrants, 58.6% are based in middle eastern nations, where 28% work in construction, 16% in manufacturing and 10% in wholesale and retail trade. However, COVID-19 resulted in the job loss of 20% of international migrants, primarily in the craft and trades and elementary occupations. Around 5% of the workers returned to Bangladesh.

Those who want to migrate cited better job opportunities (90%) and lack of opportunity (31%) as the major reasons behind it. Few cited educational facilities, social status, and infrastructural facilities as other reasons for desiring to migrate. Among the aspiring migrants, 52% are secondary education passed. Those who planned to migrate abroad cited a halt in visa processing and increased charge of recruiting agencies as the main obstacles to migration. Moreover, they mentioned multiple reasons such as increased travel expense, complexity in visa procedure, ban on recruiting etc as barriers to migration.

The following suggestions can be utilized to address the challenges of the labour market during the COVID-19 pandemic: (i) identifying those sectors that have not been able to recover (construction, transportation, hotel and restaurant etc.) is essential; (ii) it is crucial to consider separate incentives with minimal conditionality towards those who have not recovered; (iii) with the self-employed experiencing slower recovery, they should be in policy focus; (iv) policies towards smooth migration through diplomatic negotiations and reducing the cost of migration should be emphasized; (v) strategies to integrate the return migrants in the domestic market should be given importance; (vi) increased emphasis is needed towards incorporating safety net based skill development and employment generation schemes; (vii) increased emphasis is needed towards incorporating safety net based skill development and employment generation.

Section I: Introduction

1.1 Context

Although COVID-19 was mainly a health hazard, the lockdown that was put in place as a measure to flatten the rise in contagion resulted in serious economic crises around the world (Loayza & Pennings, 2020; Courtemanche et al., 2020; Collivignarelli et al., 2020; Codagnone et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2020; Menon, 2020; Rizvi et al. 2020). The first COVID-19 case in Bangladesh was detected on 8th March 2020, and like most other countries, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) shut down the economy as an immediate response. Consequently, several stringent measures taken by the GoB caused substantial interruptions in economic activities that resulted in unmatched havoc in the economy. This havoc created a large labour market disruption as many people either lost their jobs or earned less.

Bangladesh was facing several challenges in the labour market prior to the crisis. As per the World Bank (2017) estimate, it had been experiencing slow domestic job growth since 2010. The lack of quality jobs and its uneven access has been considered a key challenge as about 85% of the total workforce is informally employed. As the coronavirus spread around the world and workplaces closed, millions of workers lost part or all of their incomes (Khanna, 2020; Nanda, 2020). Around 12-17 million people lost their job temporarily while about 4-12 million people lost their job permanently over the period (UNDP, 2020). Even if still working, many workers had to accept wage cuts in different industries such as retail and accommodation, food services, or the textile and garment sectors. In some instances, wage cuts were negotiated in collective agreements between workers and employers.

Self-employment is considered the key driving force for the sustainable development of the economy by absorbing the unemployed population (Popescu et al., 2018; Cieslik et al., 2021). The lockdown announced by the government to contain the spread of the virus led to a shutdown of many businesses due to a sharp decline in demand and the restriction on mobility. The pandemic forced people, employed in the urban service sectors, to be badly hit. As most of the jobs in the urban services sectors are informal and job security is virtually absent in these engagements, the pandemic left no option for these people but to be over burnt by the heat. It crippled the industrial sector followed by the service sector; micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) were among the worst hit.

As the economy of Bangladesh heavily relies on the global supply chains, particularly Ready-Made Garments (RMG) and foreign remittance, the country faced a severe impact of the global economic meltdown (Amit, 2020). About 10 million Bangladeshi international migrant workers are contributing to the domestic economy by working mostly in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and South-East Asian countries (UNDP, 2020). The remittance from migrants is a major contributor to the foreign exchange reserve of Bangladesh which is around 6 per cent of GDP (Khan et al., 2021). In FY2019, the remittance inflow in Bangladesh was around $16.4 billion (BB, 2020). With the COVID-19 pandemic, however, many workers were laid off or sent back without compensation. They are now homebound as the global economy is crippled by the crisis. Uncertainty about their remigration is looming large. Moreover, IMF forecasts a sharp contraction of GCC economies in 2020 which will have a serious socio-economic impact on millions of Bangladeshis working there and their families dependent on them. The aspirant migrant workers are also badly affected as on one side their demand in the international markets shrinks, and they also face different problems in travelling.

The severity of the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic might differ across gender, region, and income groups. People with the most limited means are worst affected. There is a consensus that women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic as they are highly engaged in health and care work. Moreover, they have also experienced more job loss as they are disproportionately concentrated in jobs that are not doable from home.

Despite the negative effects of the pandemic on economic activity, the economy is on the road to recovery. The economy hasn't yet started to pick up, though. The 8th Five Year Plan (8FYP), the Government of Bangladesh's Vision 2021, and the SDGs' vision for inclusive economic growth for all call for understanding the dynamics of the labour market in both the pre-COVID and post-COVID contexts. By undertaking a nationwide employment and migration survey in 2021, the study hopes to evaluate the changing dynamics of the labour market in the context of COVID-19. The study refers to the Study on Employment, Productivity, and Sectoral Investment in Bangladesh (2018) as the benchmark data for the analysis.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The core objective of the study is to investigate the dynamics of the labour market in both the pre-COVID and post-COVID contexts. The study provides a special focus on internal and external migration and identifies the issues that domestic and foreign migrant workers faced. Moreover, the study attempts to explore the current scenario of economic recovery from the COVID-induced economic shocks.

1.3 Organization of the report

This report has been organized in the following manner: Section II details the survey methodology and sampling distribution. In section III, the household and population characteristics of the non-migrant sample have been analyzed. Section IV presents the results and analysis related to the dynamics of the domestic labour market. Section V incorporates the labour market recovery scenarios from COVID-19 induced income shock. In section VI, the experience of internal, external and aspirant migrant workers during the pandemic has been observed. Finally, section VII concludes with a set of recommendations to be implemented.

Section II: Methodology

In 2018, SANEM, in partnership with the General Economic Division (GED), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Bangladesh, conducted a nationally representative survey of 10500 households as part of the project "Study on Employment, Productivity, and Sectoral Investment in Bangladesh". A total of 500 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) were used to collect the sample, which was dispersed over all eight divisions and 64 districts. The survey covered sections on poverty, income, and employment (PIE) along with migration, remittances, and other basic household characteristics.

In 2021, the study took a slightly different approach to survey both non-migrant and migrant households. The study approached all migrant households from the household survey of 2018. Nonetheless, for the non-migrant households, the study followed the same sampling framework in line with the 2018 survey.

Data was collected over the phone between January-February 2021. Household heads or other members of the same households who had previously participated in the survey were questioned. The survey included separate sections for non-migrants and migrants. Questions on employment and income were incorporated for the non-migrant section (households with no migrant member). Moreover, the survey had separate sections for migrant households (households with migrant members) as well as for those households where we had members who are interested to migrate ('aspiring'). To capture the overall situation of work and income between pre-Covid and post-Covid periods, data on respondents' income, employment, migration, remittances, and experiences with COVID-19 were collected.

A total of 2845 non-migrants, 230 internal migrants, and 273 international migrants were surveyed. The survey had a 19% non-response rate (due to network issues, language barriers, wrong numbers, etc.) and a 5% decline rate. Before going to interpret the findings of the survey, it is critical to understand whether there is systemic bias in attrition/success in the survey.

Hence, a careful checking for the attrition bias is needed based on several observable characteristics of the households such as sample distribution by divisions and regions; sex, marital status and age of the household head; household head's main occupation, household's main income sources, and education level of the household head. One simple way of checking the presence of systematic bias in the attrition rate is just to compare the sample distribution in the two rounds of the survey. A comparison of covered and non-covered households in 2021 with the overall sample distribution of households surveyed in 2018 is as follows:

2.1 Sample distribution between 2018 and 2021 surveys by divisions

The percentage of sample distribution in Barisal, Sylhet, Dhaka, Mymensingh, and Rangpur stays the same in both rounds of the survey. It implies that these divisions are not subject to attrition bias. However, in the 2021 survey, the percentage of sample distribution in Khulna and Chattogram falls below 2018, while it increases above 2018 in Rajshahi. The percentage point variations in the sample distributions of 2018 and 2021 in these three divisions are very minimal and might be insignificant.

Figure 1: Sample distribution in 2018 by divisions (10500 HHs)

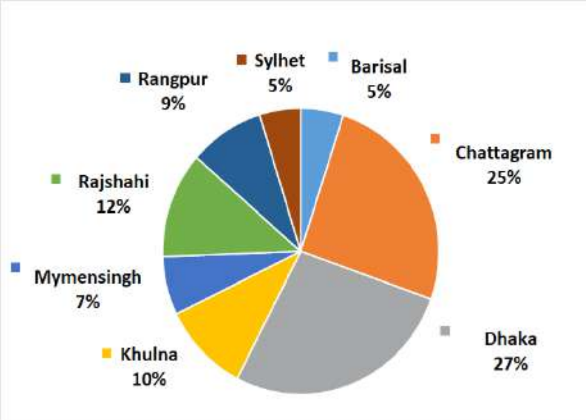
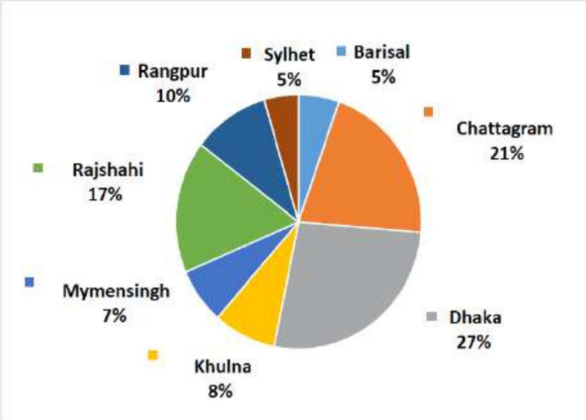


Figure 2: Sample distribution in 2021 by divisions (2026 HHs)

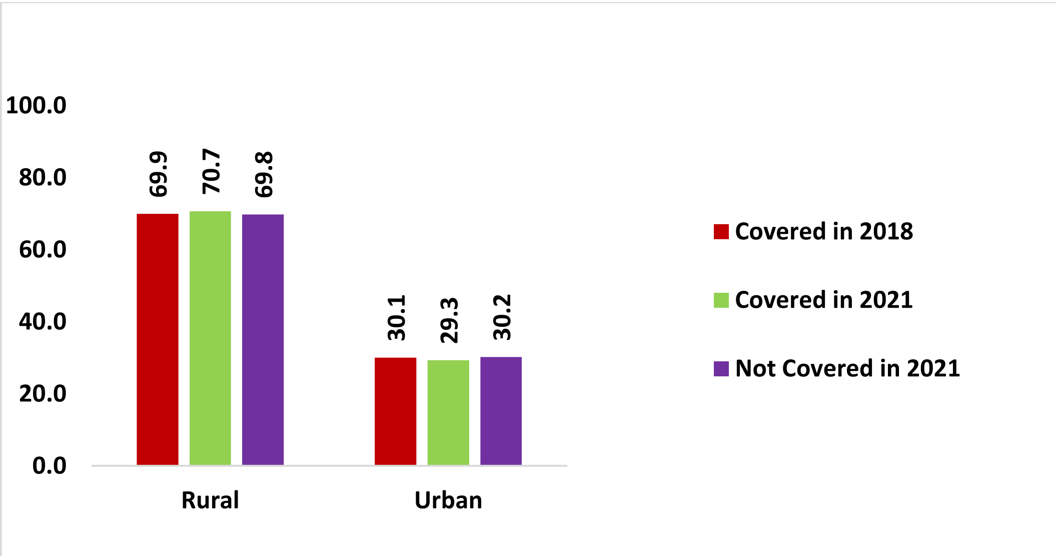


Source: Authors' estimation based on SANEM household survey, 2018 & SANEM employment survey, 2021

2.2 Sample distribution between 2018 and 2021 surveys by region

In 2018, 69.9% of rural households and 30.1% of urban households were surveyed, but in 2021, the coverage rate for rural and urban households was 70.7% and 29.3% respectively, demonstrating no greater differences than in 2018 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Sample distribution by region and coverage status

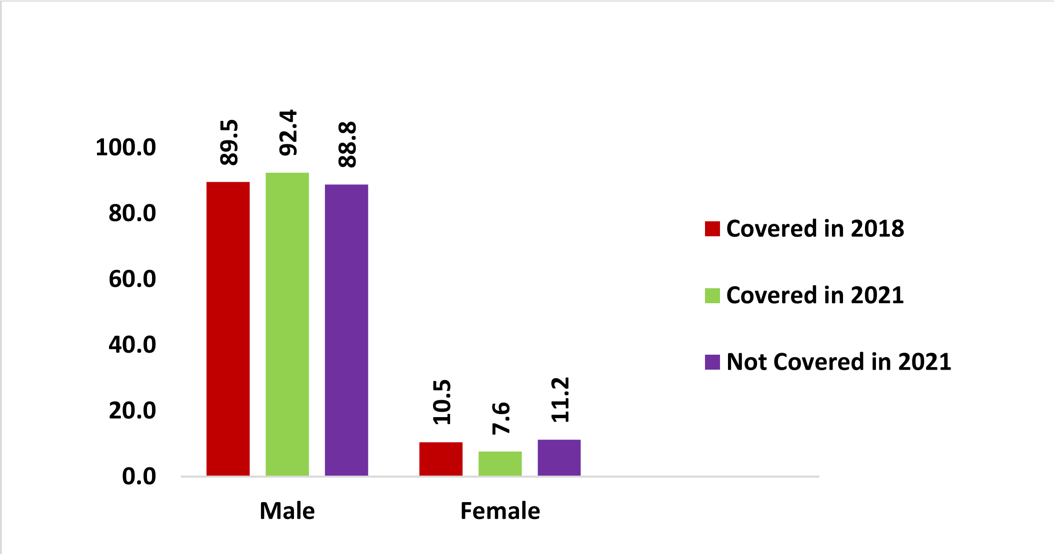


Source: Authors' estimation based on SANEM household survey, 2018 & SANEM employment survey, 2021

2.3 Sample distribution between 2018 and 2021 surveys by sex of household head

In 2018, 89.5% of male-headed households and 10.5% of female-headed households were surveyed, but in 2021, the rates were 92.4% and 7.6% respectively for the male-headed and female-headed households (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Sample distribution by sex of household head and coverage status



Source: Authors' estimation based on SANEM household survey, 2018 & SANEM employment survey, 2021

2.4 Sample distribution between 2018 and 2021 surveys by age categories of the household head

The study categorized age into six groups: 15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 65 and above, to find the presence of any attrition bias in sample distribution within different age categories (Table 1). In 2018, 49.5% of household heads were between the ages of 15-44, whereas in 2021, 48.2% of household heads were between the ages of 15-44. Further, in 2018 and 2021, 25% and 26.2% of the household heads were 45-54 years old respectively. According to this analysis, it can be deduced that there is little to no risk of attrition bias in the sample distribution by age categories.

Table 1: Sample distribution by age categories of the household head and coverage status

Age of Household Head	*Covered in 2018*	*Covered in 2021*	*Not Covered in 2021*
15-24	2.53	1.80	3.33
25-34	18.94	17.27	20.76
35-44	27.98	29.10	26.77
45-54	25.00	26.18	23.71
55-64	16.09	16.5	15.64
65+	9.46	9.15	9.79
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Authors' estimation based on SANEM household survey, 2018 & SANEM employment survey, 2021

2.5 Sample distribution between 2018 and 2021 surveys by marital status of the household head

In 2018, 92.1% of married household heads were surveyed, whereas 93.1% of married household heads were surveyed in 2021 (Table 2). In the case of widowed, the percentage was 6% in 2021, compared to 5.15% in 2018. In 2018, 0.30% were divorced, compared to 0.28% in 2021. Separated made up 0.74% of the sample population in 2018, and 0.78% in 2021.

Table 2: Sample distribution by marital status of the household head and coverage status

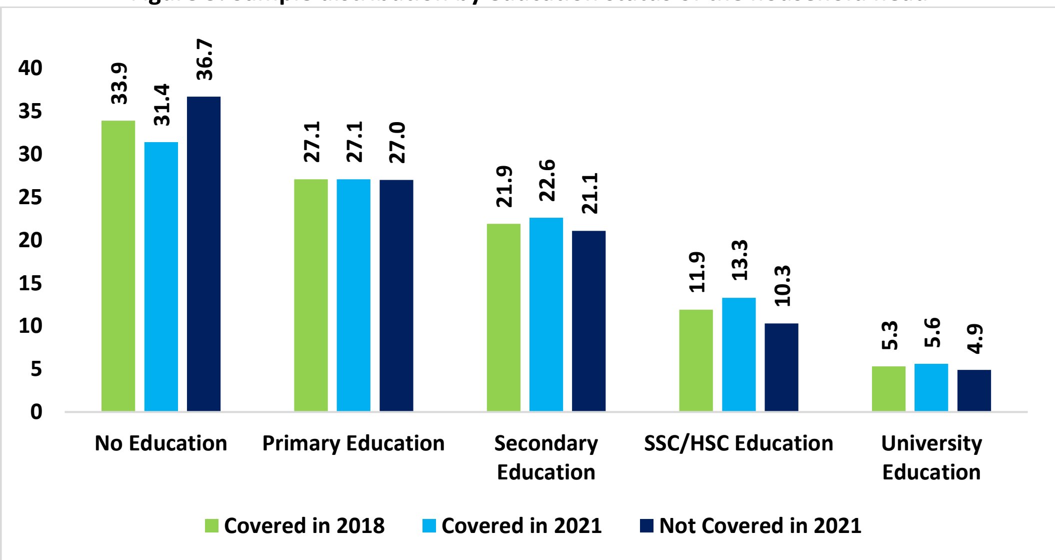
Marital Status of Household Head	*Covered in 2018*	*Covered in 2020*	*Not Covered in 2020*
Currently Married	92.11	93.13	91.01
Never Married	1.69	1.46	1.93
Widowed	5.15	4.38	6.00
Divorced	0.30	0.33	0.28
Separated	0.74	0.71	0.78

Source: Authors' estimation based on SANEM household survey, 2018 & SANEM employment survey, 2021

2.6 Sample distribution between 2018 and 2021 surveys by education status of the household head

In comparison to the 2018 survey, the 2021 survey covered fewer no passed and more SSC/HSC passed household heads. Between the 2018 and 2021 samples, the percentage rate of primary, secondary, and university-passed household heads was more or less similar (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Sample distribution by education status of the household head

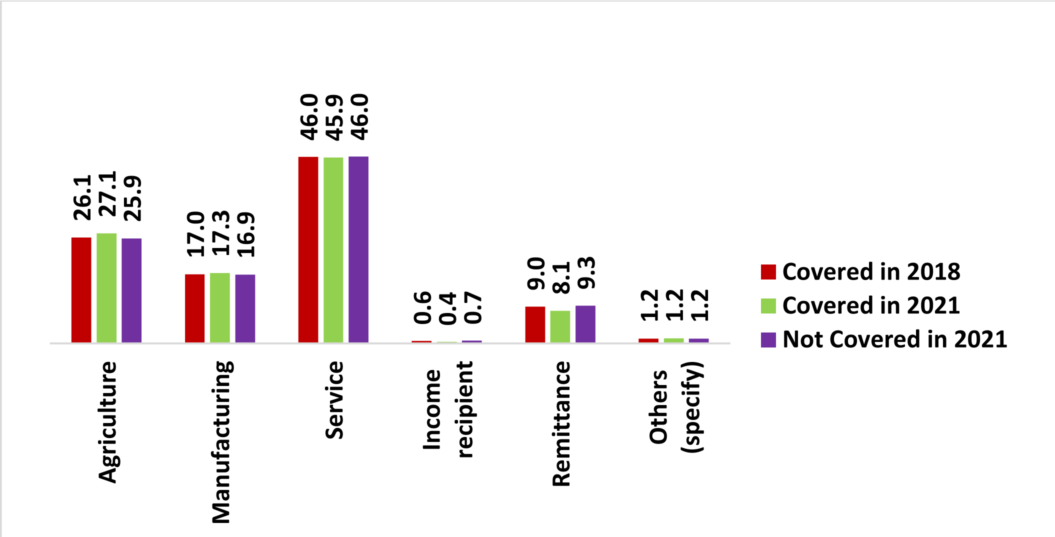


Source: Authors' estimation based on SANEM household survey, 2018 & SANEM employment survey, 2021

2.7 Sample distribution between 2018 and 2021 surveys by income source of the household

In the 2018 survey, agriculture was the source of income for 26.1% of household heads, compared to 27.1% in 2021 (Figure 6). Similarly, the study included 17% and 17.3% of household heads in 2018 and 2021, respectively, whose primary source of income was in the manufacturing sector. In 2018, 9% of household heads relied on remittances from within or outside the country for income, compared to 8.1% in 2021.

Figure 6: Sample distribution by income source of the household head and coverage status

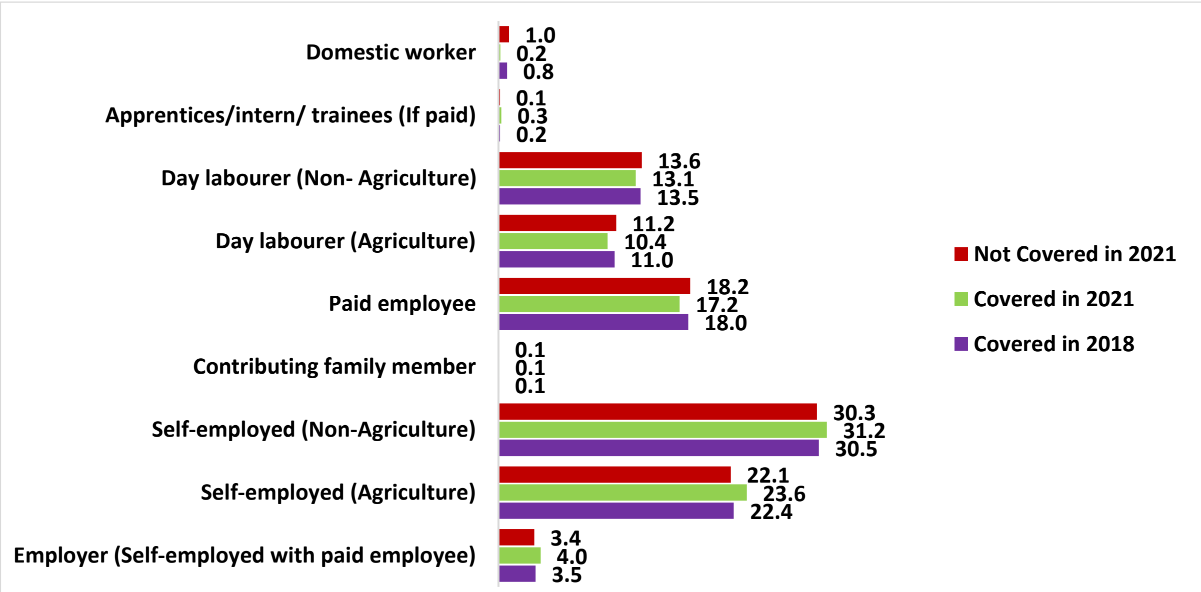


Source: Authors' estimation based on SANEM household survey, 2018 & SANEM employment survey, 2021

2.8 Sample distribution between 2018 and 2021 surveys by the main occupation of the household head

In the 2021 survey, 31.2% of non-agricultural household heads were self-employed, compared to 30.5% in 2018 (Figure 7). In 2021 and 2018, 22.4% and 23.6% of household heads who are self-employed in agriculture were covered, respectively. In 2018, 18% of household heads were paid employees, compared to 17.2% in 2021.

Figure 7: Sample distribution by the main occupation of the household head and coverage status



Source: Authors' estimation based on SANEM household survey, 2018 & SANEM employment survey, 2021

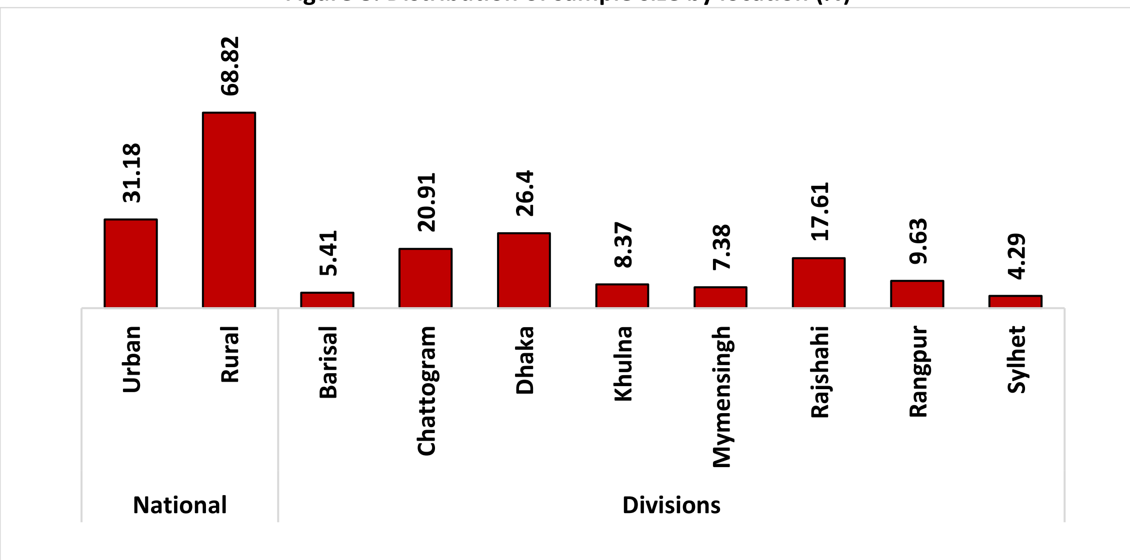
Section III: Distribution of Non-migrant Sample

As mentioned in the methodology part, the study took separate approaches to survey non-migrant and migrant households. The study approached all migrant households from the household survey of 2018. Nonetheless, for the non-migrant households, the study followed the same sampling framework in line with the 2018 survey. That is, for the non-migrant households to be questioned in 2021, a random sampling method was applied. This section covers the demographic distribution of non-migrant samples by location, gender, marital status, age categories, education levels, training status, and employment categories, as the non-migrant sample represents the country.

3.1 Distribution of sample by location

The survey covers all of Bangladesh's rural-urban regions and administrative divisions (Figure 8). The rural areas account for 68.8% of the overall sample, whereas urban areas account for only 31.8%. When looking at the sample's divisional distribution, it displays that Dhaka division covers the most (26.4%) of the entire sample, followed by Chattogram division (20.9%), Rajshahi division (17.6%), and Rangpur division (9.6%). Furthermore, Barisal, Khulna, and Sylhet divisions each cover 5.4%, 8.4%, and 4.3% of the sample, respectively.

Figure 8: Distribution of sample size by location (%)

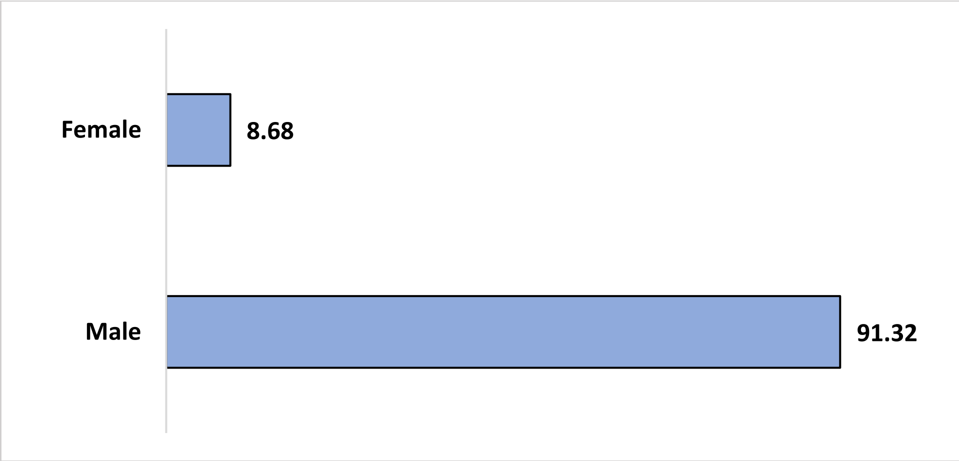


Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

3.2 Distribution of sample by gender

The distribution of the non-migrant sample can be disaggregated by gender (Figure 9). The study shows that 91.3% of non-migrant respondents are males while females account for only 8.7%. The low percentage of female respondents is because the study only includes individuals who are active participants in the labour force. Since Bangladesh's female labour force participation percentage is barely 36%, which could explain the survey's low female participation rate.

Figure 9: Distribution of sample by gender (%)



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

3.3 Distribution of sample population by marital status

Overall, 81.2% of non-migrant respondents are married, while 17.5% are unmarried (Table 3). When examining the marital status of male and female respondents separately, it shows that 82.3% of male respondents are married and 17.4% are unmarried, whereas 70.0% of female respondents are married and 19.0% are unmarried. The overall non-migrant sample for widowed people is 1.0%, divorced people are 0.1%, and separated people are 0.1%.

Table 3: Distribution of sample population by marital status (%)

Marital Status	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Married	82.29	70.04	81.23
Unmarried	17.36	19.03	17.5
Widowed	0.27	8.91	1.02
Divorced	0.08	0.81	0.14
Separated	0.00	1.21	0.11

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

3.4 Distribution of sample population by age categories

To understand the sample distribution of surveyed population across various age groups, the study categorizes age into seven age groups (Table 4). Comparatively, the age groups 25-34 years (25.7%) and 35-44 years (25.6%) account for a bigger proportion of the non-migrants. Age groups 45-54 years account for 18.0%, followed by 15-24 years (15.0%), and 55-64 years (11.0%). A relatively smaller percentage of the non-migrant sample belongs to the age group 65+ years (4.68%) and 0-14 years (0.63%).

When looking at the age distribution of the sample by gender, the male sample has a higher percentage of total surveyed non-migrants in the age groups of 35-44 (25.7%) and 45-54 (18.4%), while the female sample has a greater percentage of total surveyed non-migrants in the age groups of 15-24 (14.4%) and 25-34 (24.8%).

Table 4: Distribution of sample population by age categories (%)

Age Categories	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
0-14	0.54	1.62	0.63
15-24	14.44	20.65	14.98
25-34	24.8	34.82	25.67
35-44	25.72	23.89	25.56
45-54	18.44	12.96	17.97
55-64	11.01	5.26	10.51
65+	5.04	0.81	4.68

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

3.5 Distribution of sample population by education status

The education status of the sample population is categorized into five levels-no class passed, primary education, secondary education, higher secondary education, and higher education (Table 5). The sample population has the highest percentage of people with secondary education (35.83%), followed by those with no education (22.81%) and those with primary education (22.24%). Comparatively, the sample is lower in higher secondary levels (10.08%) and higher education levels (9.04%). While focusing on the education status based on gender, it is observed that the education status of the male and female respondents does differ significantly. Further, insignificant changes in education status between the rural and urban samples are found when education status is investigated by location.

Table 5: Distribution of sample population by education status (%)

Education levels	*Male*	*Female*	*Urban*	*Rural*	*National*
No Class Passed	22.65	24.48	20.55	23.84	22.81
Primary Education	22.73	17.01	20.90	22.85	22.24
Secondary Education	36.40	29.88	36.97	35.32	35.83
Higher Secondary Education	9.82	12.86	11.25	9.55	10.08
Higher Education	8.40	15.77	10.33	8.45	9.04
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

3.6 Distribution of sample population participating in training

The distribution of male and female populations participating in training over the last three years at rural, urban, and national levels is presented in Table 6. In total, only 5.46% of respondents received training in the last three years. While females account for 10.2% of the population, males account for only 5.1%. However, there is no substantial difference in the percentage of responders who received training between rural and urban areas.

Table 6: Distribution of sample population participating in training in the last three years (%)

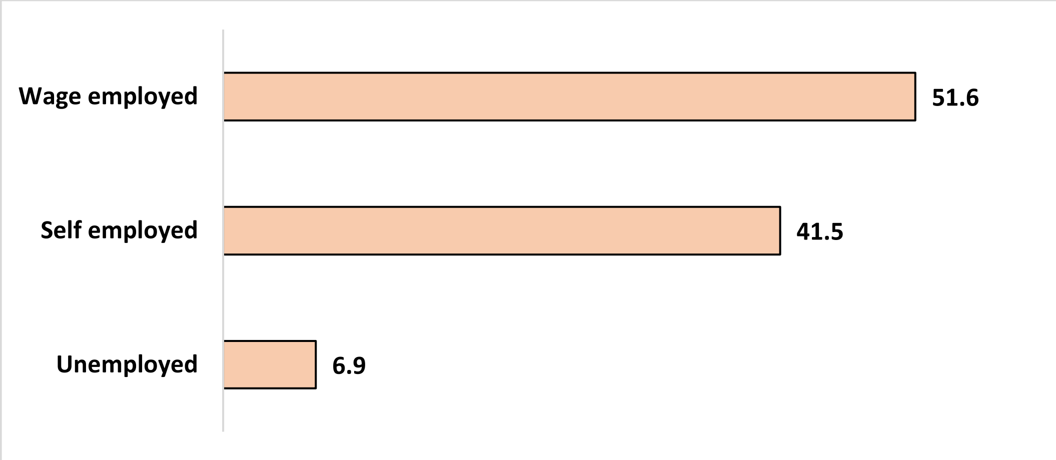
Location	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Rural	5.09	10.00	5.47
Urban	4.83	10.53	5.44
National	5.01	10.20	5.46

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

3.7 Distribution of sample by employment categories

The non-migrant sample is distributed by broad employment categories as follows: 51.6% are wage workers, 41.5% are self-employed, and 6.9% are unemployed (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Distribution of sample population by broad employment categories (%)

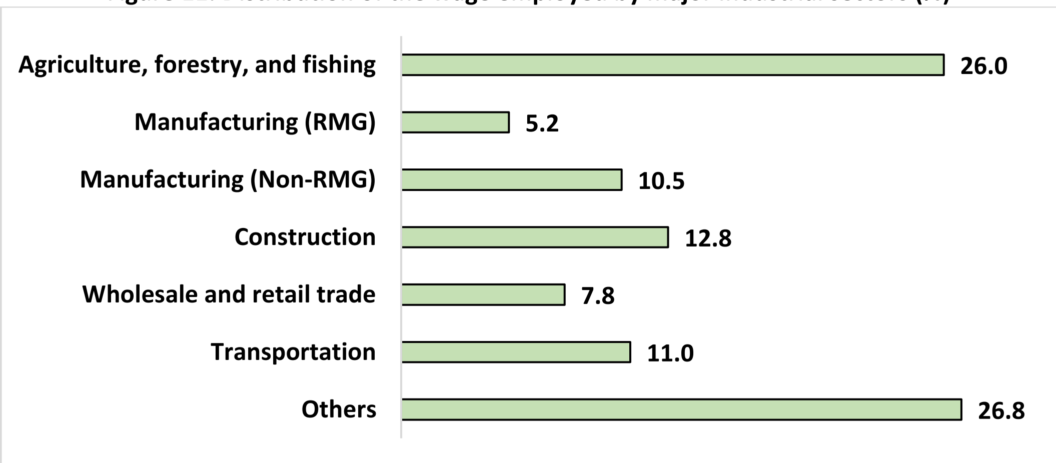


Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

3.8 Distribution of the wage employed by major sectors

The distribution of wage employment can be broken down into some major sectors (Figure 11). Agriculture employs the greatest number of people (26.0%), followed by construction (12.8%), transportation (11.0%), manufacturing (non-RMG) (10.5%), and wholesale and retail trade (7.8%). The least percentage of wage employed is allocated to the manufacturing (RMG) sector (5.2%).

Figure 11: Distribution of the wage employed by major industrial sectors (%)

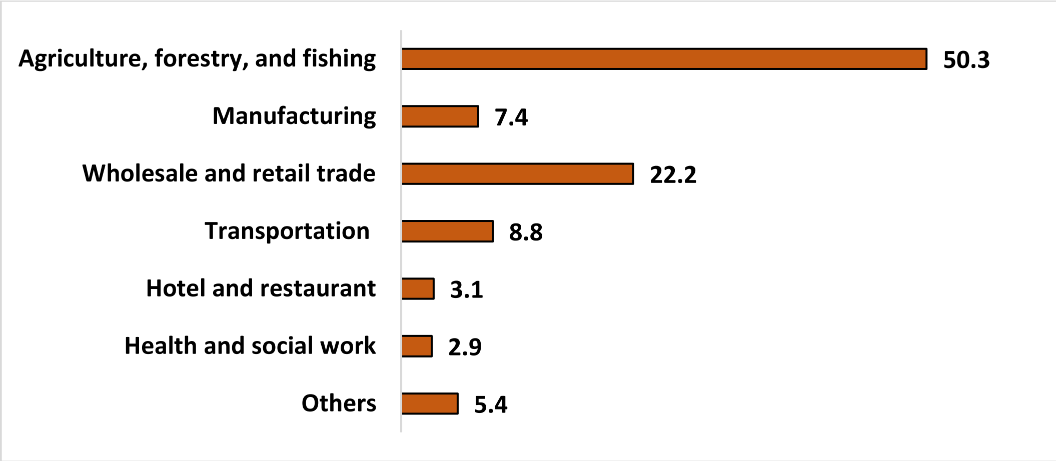


Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

3.9 Distribution of the self-employed by major sectors

Similarly, the distribution of self-employment can be also disaggregated into some major sectors (Figure 12). Agriculture, forestry, and fishing employ the greatest number of self-employed people (50.3%). The wholesale and retail trade employs 22.2% of the self-employed, followed by 8.8% in transportation, 7.4% in manufacturing, 5.4% in other industries, 3.1% in hotel and restaurants, and 2.9% in health and social work.

Figure 12: Distribution of self-employed by major industrial sectors (%)



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

Section IV: Dynamics of the Domestic Labour Market

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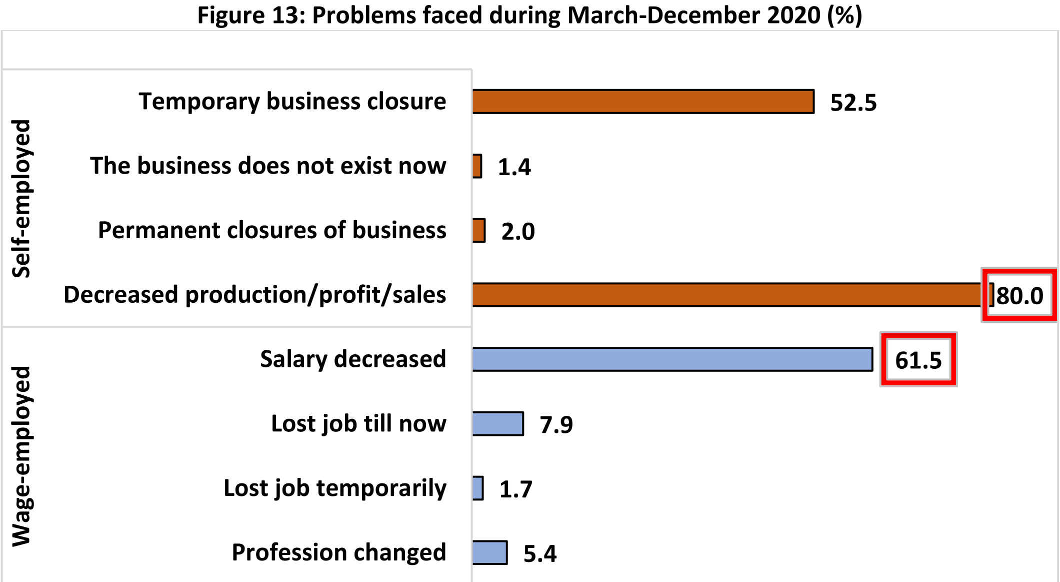
According to the Labour Force Survey of 2016-17 conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 63.4 million people participate in the labour force, among which 43.6 million are male and 19.8 million are female. The LFS 2016-17 found that the labour force participation rate of the population aged 15 or older was 58.2%, of which 80.5% for males and 36.3% for females. It was also estimated that 60.8 million of the population aged 15 or older were employed. Of the total employed persons aged 15 or older, 85.1% were in informal employment, while only 14.9% were in formal employment. However, the COVID-19 pandemic might change the scenario by disrupting macroeconomic stability and people's livelihood. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was not only a threat to human health but also to the whole economy. The restriction on the movement of people and frequent lock-downs created a tremendous negative impact on the economy and the adverse effect of COVID-19 transmitted to the labour market participation and wage earning. The economy was also hit hard by the closure of businesses and industries due to a decline in both demand and supply patterns globally. There had been a sharp and unprecedented fall in employment because many workers had been laid off due to low profit and millions of workers lost part or all of their income. An overview of the effects of the COVID-19 induced crisis on the labour market of Bangladesh is presented in this chapter.

4.1 Problems faced by workers during March-December 2020 by employment status

To understand what problems workers faced during March-December 2020, the respondents were asked 'What kind of problems did you face doing business since March 2020?'. In the case of self-employed workers, 80% faced a decrease in production, sales or profits, followed by temporary business closure (52.5%), permanent closure of the business (2%) and no existence of business (1.4%) among others (Figure 13). On the other hand, for the wage-employed workers, 61.5% experienced a decrease in salary followed by permanent job loss (7.9%), change in professions (5.4%) and temporary job loss (1.&%) among others.

Figure 13: Problems faced during March-December 2020 (%)



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

4.2 Problems faced by workers during March-December 2020 by gender

The problems faced by the workers might not be the same across the gender. In the case of the male population under wage-employed, 62.5% faced salary cuts, followed by permanent job loss (7.1%), a change in the profession (5.5%) and temporarily job loss (1.7%) among others. For self-employed males, 81.2% experienced a decrease in production/profit/sales followed by the closure of the business (53.8%) and permanent closure of the business (1.9%) among others (Figure 14).

In contrast, in the case of the female wage-employed, 49.1% experienced a decrease in salary followed by permanent job loss (16.1%), change in the profession (3.5%) and temporary job loss (1.7%) among others. For self-employed females, 62.5% faced a decrease in production, sales or profits followed by a halt in business (33.3%), and permanent closure of the business (4.1%) among others (Figure 15).

Figure 14: Problems faced during COVID for male (%)

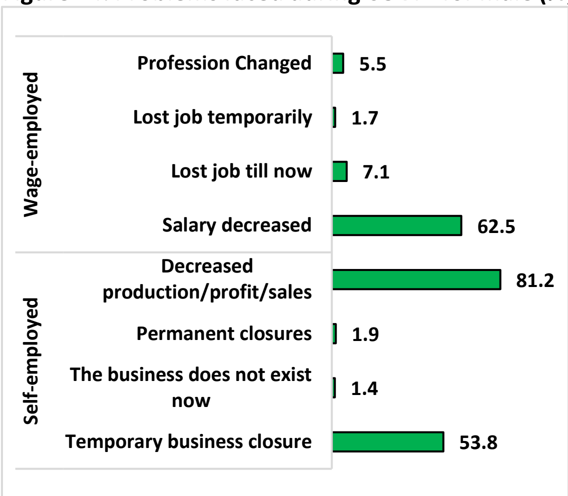
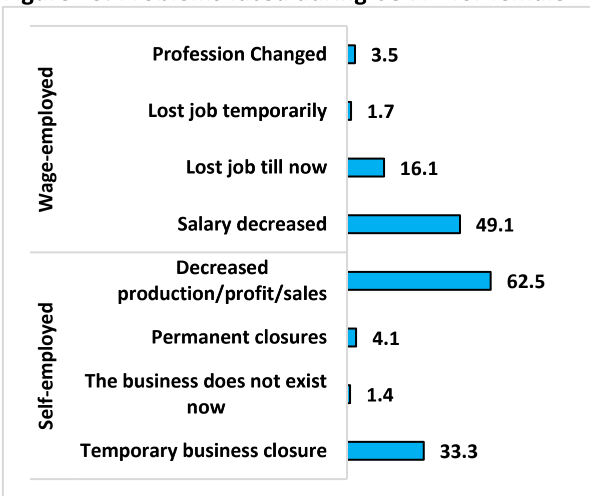


Figure 15: Problems faced during COVID for female



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

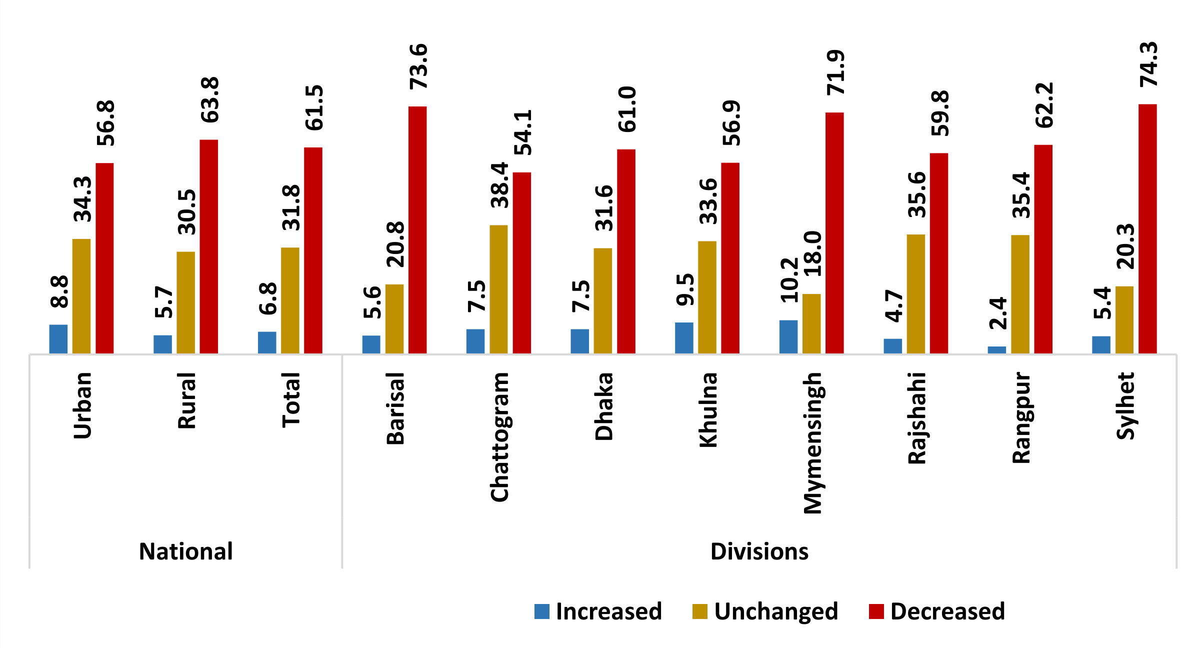
4.3 Change in income during March-December 2020 at national and sub-national levels

The COVID-19 pandemic hit hardest on workers' earnings and was no different in Bangladesh's labour market. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Bangladeshi workers' earnings or income can be observed by comparing the change in income from March-December 2020 at the national and sub-national (division) levels (Figure 16).

At the national level, 61.5% of respondents reported that they experienced a decrease in income while 31.8% of them mentioned no change in their income during this time. 56.8% of people in the urban region reported that they faced a decrease in income and 8.8% reported that they faced an increase in income. Whereas 63.8% of people in the rural region stated that they experienced a reduction in income, only 5.7% experienced an increase in income. The unchanged income experienced by the population was 30.5%.

At the divisional level, 74.3% of respondents in Sylhet faced the highest decrease in income followed by the respondents in Barisal (73.6%) and Mymensingh (71.9%). The highest increase in income was reported by 10.2% of locals in Mymensingh, followed by Khulna (9.5%), Dhaka (7.5%) and Chattogram (7.5%). Further, 38.4% of the respondents in Chattogram reported their income remained unchanged, followed by Rajshahi (35.6%), Rangpur (35.4%) and Khulna (33.6%).

Figure 16: Change in income during March-December 2020 by location (% of respondents)

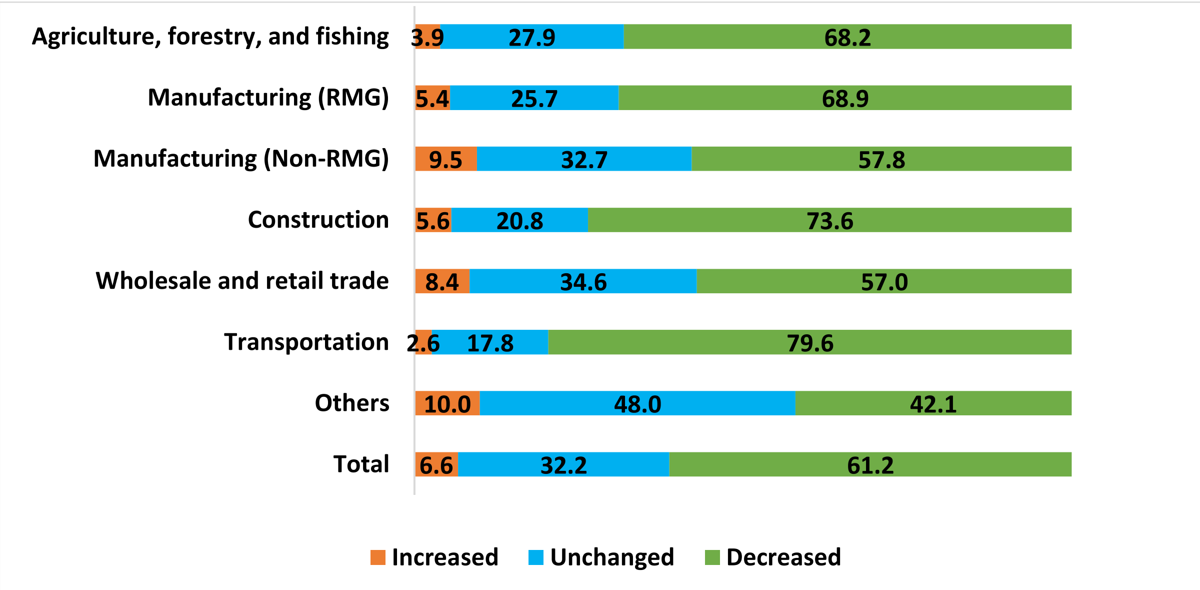


Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

4.4 Change in income during March-December 2020 by major sectors

As observed, the change in income is not uniform across the divisions or sub-national levels. However, it might not be the same across the sectors (Table 17).

Figure 17: Change in income during March-December 2020 by major sectors (% of respondents)



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

In the transportation sector, 79.6% of the respondents faced a decrease in income followed by construction (73.6%), manufacturing (RMG) (68.9%) and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (68.2%), manufacturing (non-RMG) (57.8%), wholesale and retail trade (57.0%), and the other sector (42.1%).

2.6% of the respondents in the transportation sector faced the least amount of increase in income, followed by agriculture, forestry, and fishing (3.9%). The highest amount of increase in income was reported by other sectors (10.0%) followed by manufacturing (non-RMG) (9.5%) and wholesale and retail trade (8.4%).

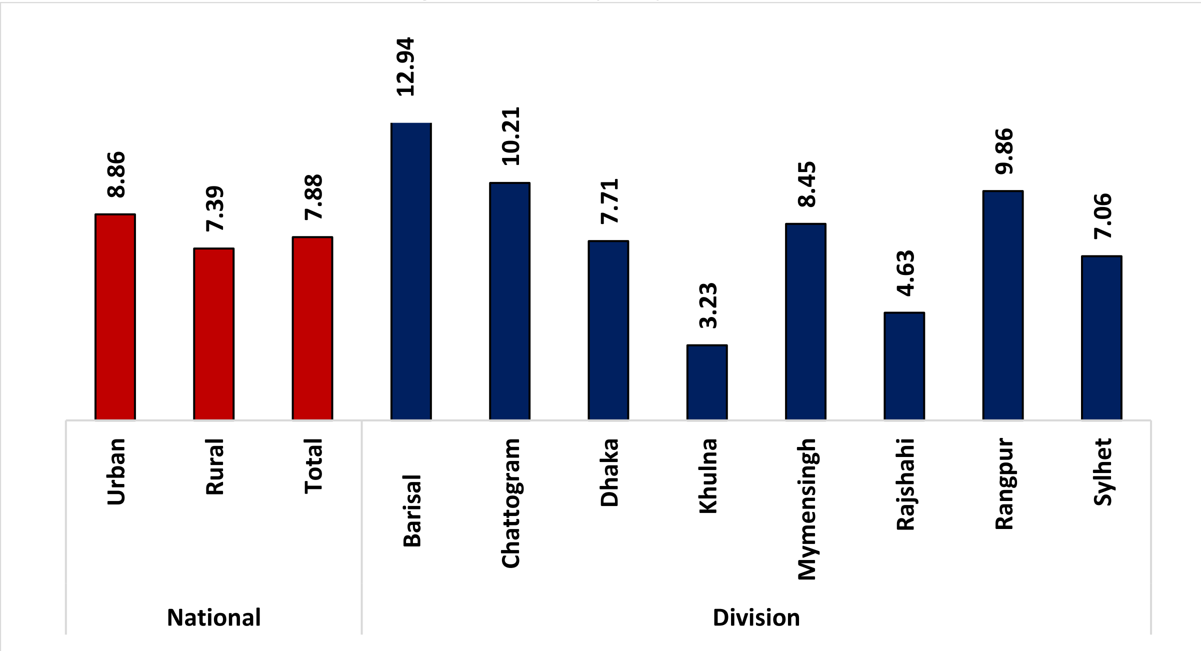
48.0% of the respondents in the other sectors reported their income remained unchanged followed by wholesale and retail trade (34.6%) and the manufacturing (non-RMG) sector (32.7%) among others. Overall, 61.2% of respondents reported a decrease in income, 6.6% of respondents reported an increased income, and 32.2% of respondents said that their income remained unchanged.

4.5 Job loss during COVID-19 and still unemployed at national and sub-national levels

Due to the income shocks, unemployment rose significantly across Bangladesh from March-December 2020 (Figure 18). The loss of jobs in the urban area was 8.9% and it was 7.4% in the rural area, cumulating a total of 7.9% of jobs in the country during the COVID-19.

At the division level, Barisal experienced the largest rate of unemployment (12.9%), followed by Chattogram (10.2%), Rangpur (9.9%), Mymensingh (8.5%), Dhaka (7.7%), Sylhet (7.1%). In contrast, Khulna (3.2%) and Rajshahi (4.6%) experienced the lowest rate of unemployment.

Figure 18: Loss of job by location (%)

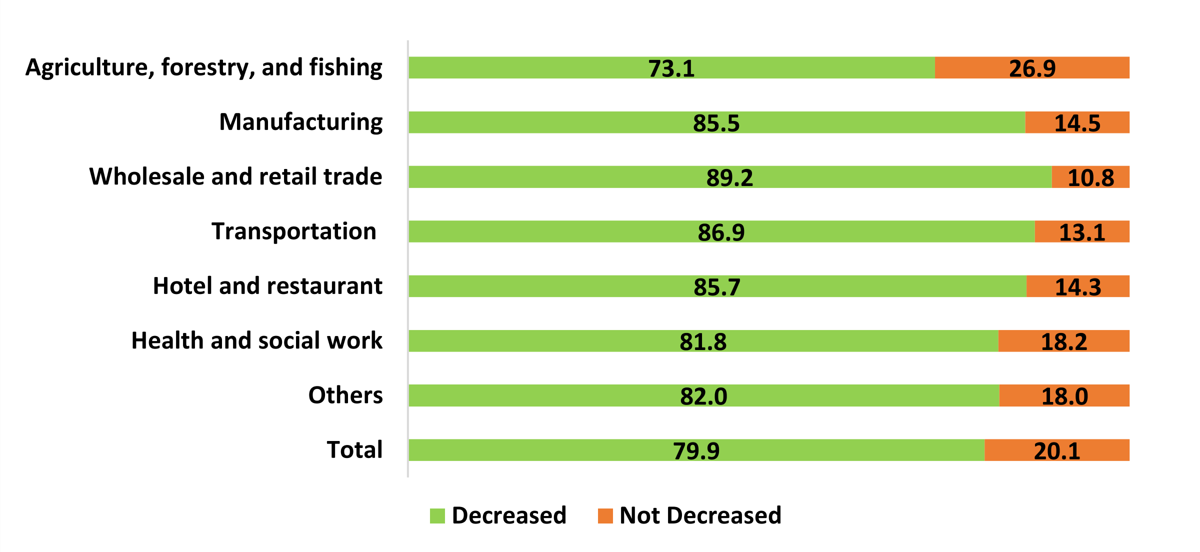


Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

4.6 Experienced decreased production/sales/profit by self-employed between March-December 2020 in major sectors

Many sectors in Bangladesh experienced a decrease in production/sales/profit between March-December 2020 (Figure 19). The wholesale and retail trade experienced the greatest decrease in production, sales, or profits (89.2%) followed by transportation (86.9%), hotel and restaurant (85.7%) and manufacturing (85.5%) among others. In contrast, 26.9% of the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector's production, sales, or profits did not decrease followed by health and social work (18.2%) and other sectors (18.0%) among others. Overall, the experience of the decrease in production, sales, or profit was 79.9% and no decrease was 20.1%.

Figure 19: Experienced decreased production/sales/profit between March-December 2020 by major sectors (%)



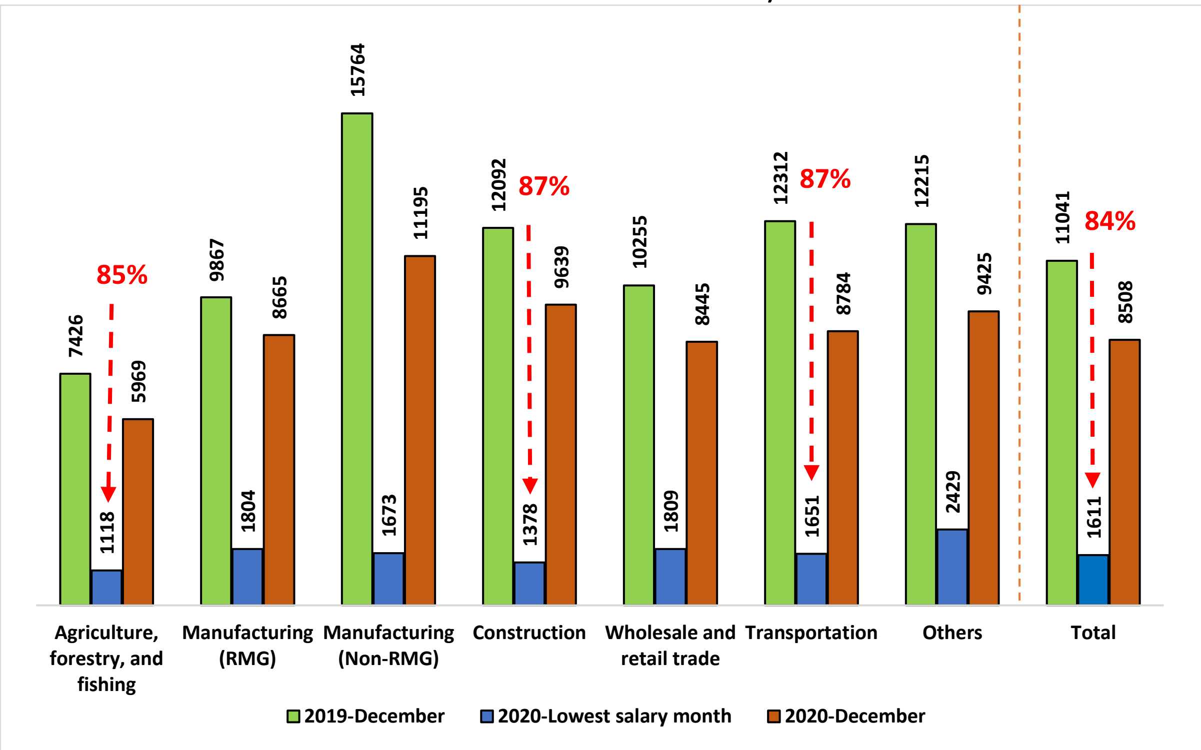
Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

4.7 Dynamics of income for the wage employed between December 2019 and December 2020 by major sectors

The pandemic resulted in a reduction in wages or salaries for a major portion of the workforce. To examine the extent of the decrease in salary by major sectors, this study compares the income of those who have experienced a decrease in wage or salary for three points-the income in December 2019, the income in the lowest salaried month between March-December 2020, and the income in December 2020 (Figure 20).

Overall, the income in the lowest salaried month was on average 84% lower than the income in December 2019. The income in December 2020 was comparable to the income in December 2019, despite a sharp decline in income between December 2019 and the lowest salaried month between March and December 2020. The construction and transportation sectors had been particularly hard hit by the lockdown implemented to contain the virus' spread, as shown by the average decline in income between December 2020 and the lowest salaried month between March and December 2020, which is found to be 87%. Further, the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector experienced an 85% decrease in income from December 2019 to the lowest salaried month between March and December 2020.

Figure 20: Change in income for the wage employed (December 2019, the lowest salaried month in 2020 since March & December 2020)

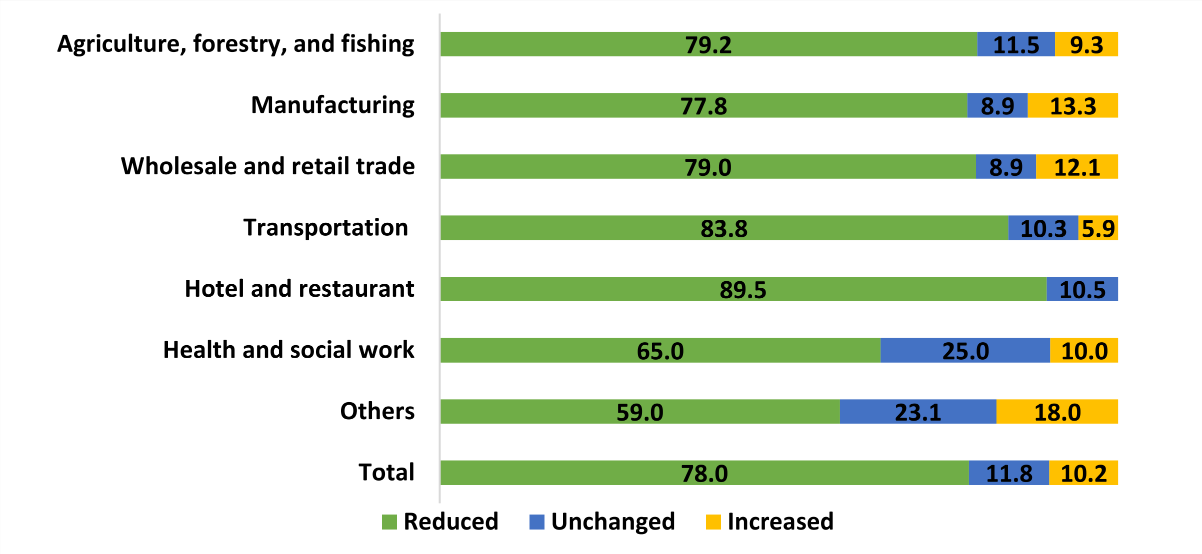


Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

4.8 Dynamics of income for the self-employed between December 2019 and December 2020 by major sectors

To determine the impact of the pandemic-induced economic crisis on the income of self-employed, this study compares the income of self-employed from December 2020 to December 2019 (Figure 21). 89.5% of the respondents in the hotel and restaurant sector reported that they experienced a fall in income, followed by the transportation sector (83.8%), agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector (79.2%), and the manufacturing sector (77.8%) among others. 25% of the respondents in the health and social work sector reported that their income remained unchanged followed by other sectors (23%), agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector (11.5%) and hotel and restaurants (10%) among others. In contrast, 18% of respondents in other sectors reported that their income increased, followed by the manufacturing sector (13.3%) and the wholesale and retail trade sector (12.1%) among others. Overall, 78% of respondents reported that their income decreased, 11.8% stated their income remained unchanged, and 10.2% said their income increased.

Figure 21: Dynamics of income for the self-employed between December 2019 and December 2020 by major sectors (%)



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

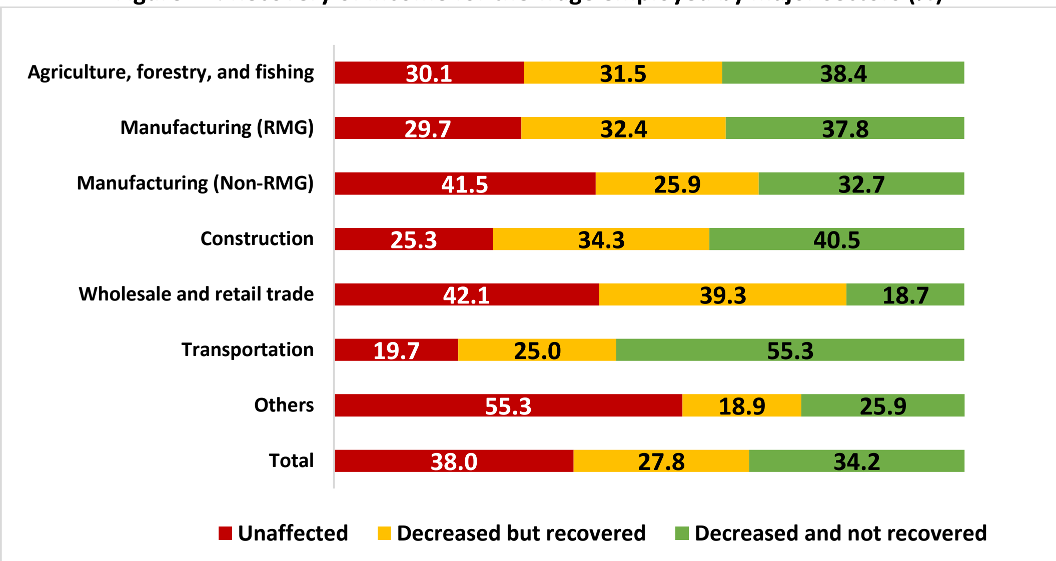
Section V: Recovery Scenarios of Labour Market from COVID-19 Induced Income Shocks

Bangladesh's recent economic trajectory was slowed down by the COVID-19 outbreak, which resulted in one of the sharpest reductions in output ever recorded. This is primarily due to supply interruptions created by government-imposed lockdowns enacted to stop the virus from spreading. It resulted in lower income for both wage and self-employed workers. However, since the lockdown lifted, the economy had begun to revive. This section provides an overview of recovery in terms of income for both wage and self-employed workers.

5.1 Recovery of income for wage employed by major sectors

Overall, 38% of wage-earning respondents said their income was unaffected from March to December 2020 (Figure 22). Of the responders who experienced a 62% loss in earnings, 27.8% returned to their pre-COVID income level (income in December 2019). The remaining 34.2% of respondents were unable to return to their pre-COVID income levels. It was also discovered that 55.3% of workers in the transportation sector claimed that their income declined from March to December 2020, but that it did not reach the December 2019 level. However, a higher percentage (39.3%) of workers in wholesale and retail trade, as well as construction (34.3%), said that their income declined between March and December 2020, but that they already returned to the December 2019 income level.

Figure 22: Recovery of income for the wage employed by major sectors (%)



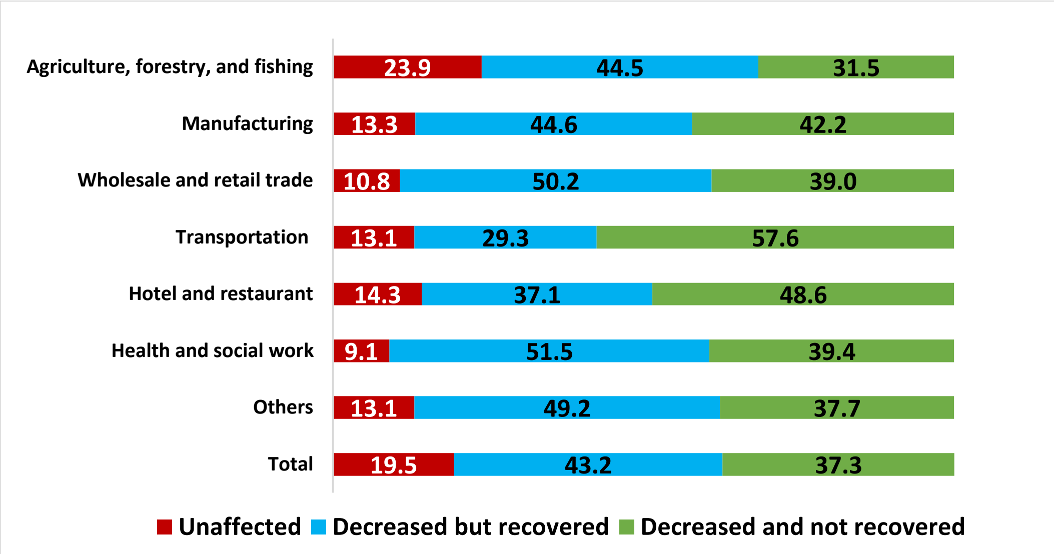
Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

5.2 Recovery of income for self-employed by major sectors

Overall, 19.5% of self-employed respondents reported their production/sales/profit did not decrease from March to December 2020, 43.2% of respondents reported their production/sales/profit decreased during the period but had already reached the December 2019 level, and the remaining 37.3% of respondents reported their production/sales/profit decreased from March to December 2020 but had not yet reached the December 2019 level

(Figure 23). Among the major sectors, a higher percentage of self-employed people in the transportation (58%) and hotel and restaurant (48.6%) sectors reported that their income fell between March and December 2020 but had not yet recovered to the level of December 2019. However, a higher percentage of self-employed respondents in health and social work (51.5%), the wholesale and retail sector (50.2%) and the manufacturing sector (44.6%) among others reported a reduction in income from March to December 2020, albeit they already returned to pre-COVID level income (income in December 2019).

Figure 23: Recovery of income for the self-employed by major sectors



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

5.3 What happened to Dhaka-based employment?

Figure 24: Problems faced during March-December 2020 (%) in Dhaka

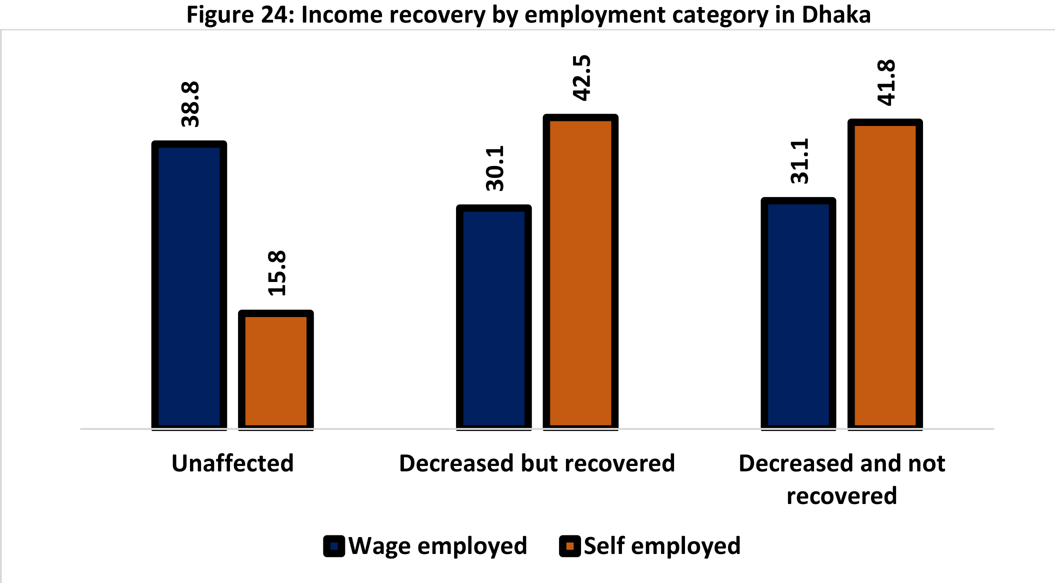
Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

Dhaka is the capital city of Bangladesh and it was hit hard by the pandemic. This sub-section tries to explore what happens to Dhaka-based employment and to what extent they recovered (Figure 24).

61% of the wage employed in Dhaka experienced a decrease in their income during March-December 2020, followed by permanent job loss (7.7%), change in professions (3.7%) and temporary job loss (1.7%) among others. In contrast, 84.2% of the self-employed in Dhaka faced a reduction in production, sales or profit, followed by temporary business closure (58.6%), and permanent business closure (3.2%) among others.

When looking at the recovery scenario, only 15.8% of self-employed people in Dhaka stated that their income remained unchanged from March to December 2020, compared to 38.8% of wage-employed. 30.1% of self-employed people in Dhaka said that their income decreased but recovered, as opposed to 42.5% of wage-employed. On the other hand, 31.1% of wage-employed in Dhaka stated a decrease in income during March-December 2020 but still did not recover compared to 41.8% of self-employed. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-employed people were more severely affected by the pandemic than those who worked for wages.

Figure 24: Income recovery by employment category in Dhaka



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

Section VI: Experience of Migrants during COVID-19

Many internal and external migrant workers were forced to return home because of job loss during the pandemic. In addition, many aspiring migrant workers are finding it difficult to go abroad due to COVID-19 related restrictions. This section presents an overview of the issues that internal, external and aspirant migrant workers were facing during the pandemic.

6.1 Profile of migrants

Bangladeshi migrants are working in many countries (Table 7). This survey reveals that the largest percentage (33%) of the international migrant workers are employed in Saudi Arabia, followed by Malaysia (12.82%), United Arab Emirates (11.36%) among others.

Table 7: Countries where the international migrants are working (%)

Country Name	*Per cent*
Saudi Arabia	32.97
Kuwait	5.13
Oman	8.79
Malaysia	12.82
Singapore	2.93
United Arab Emirates	11.36
Brunei	9.89
Others	16.12

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

Internal workers are employed in several districts in Bangladesh (Table 8). The survey shows that Dhaka (66.52%) has the highest percentage of internal migrants, followed by Gazipur (3.91%), and Narayanganj (3.04%) among others.

Table 8: Districts where the internal migrants are working (%)

District	*Per cent*
Dhaka	66.52
Gazipur	3.91
Narayanganj	3.04
Chittagong	4.35
Cumilla	2.61
Sylhet	2.61
Others	16.95

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

When looking at the education status of the surveyed internal and external migrants, it can be observed that 8.64% of the internal migrants and 6.83% of the external migrants have not passed a class. Additionally, 16.82% of the internal migrants and 16.47% of the external migrants have completed primary education. Nevertheless, education at the secondary level is the most common among internal migrants (38.18%) and external migrants (57.03%). Furthermore, 16.36% of the internal migrants and 14.86% of the external migrants have education status up to the upper secondary level. Finally, 20% of internal migrants and 4.82% of external migrants have completed higher education.

Table 9: Education status of the migrant workers (%)

Education Category	*Internal Migrant*	*External Migrant*
No class Passed	8.64	6.83
Primary Education	16.82	16.47
Secondary Education	38.18	57.03
High secondary Education	16.36	14.86
Tertiary Education	20.00	4.82
Total	100	100

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

It can be demonstrated that internal migrants make up 7% and international migrants make up 3% of professionals when examining the distribution of internal and international migrants by major occupations. 4% of internal migrants and 3% of international migrants are employed as clerical support workers. Service and sales workers hired 4% of internal migrants and 16% of international migrants. However, half of the internal migrants and 32% of the international migrants are employed as craft and related trade workers. Plant and machine operators are composed of 14% of internal migrants and 8% of international migrants and elementary occupation consists of 11% of internal migrants and 37% of external migrants. Lastly, other occupations include 11% of internal migrants and 3% of international migrants.

Table 10: Distribution of the internal and international migrant workers by major occupations (%)

Major occupations	*Internal migrants*	*International migrants*
Professionals	7	3
Clerical support workers	4	3
Service and sales workers	4	16
Craft and related trades workers	50	32
Plant and machine operators	14	8
Elementary occupation	11	37
Others	11	3

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

6.2 What happened to internal migrants?

Many internal migrants are working in different regions of the country, particularly in Dhaka. Our sample contains 230 internal migrants, out of which 66.5% are working in Dhaka, 20% work in RMG and 13.5% work in wholesale and retail trade. However, 49% of surveyed migrants returned to their village due to multiple reasons such as losing employment, a decrease in salary, or could not to afford expenses. From March-December 2020, 14% of internal migrants lost jobs. Those who lost jobs were mostly employed in craft-related trade.

Approximately 49% of the internal migrant worker returned to their home in March-December 2020 (Figure 25). The reason for reverse migration is attributed to job loss (15.8%), no payments received (19.6%), and other reasons (80.4%) (Figure 26).

Figure 25: Reverse migration of internal migrants

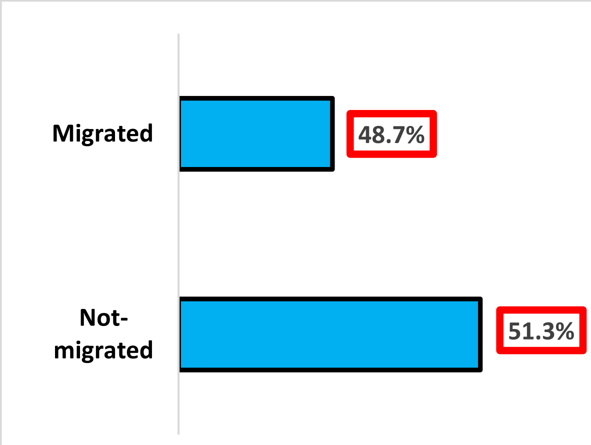
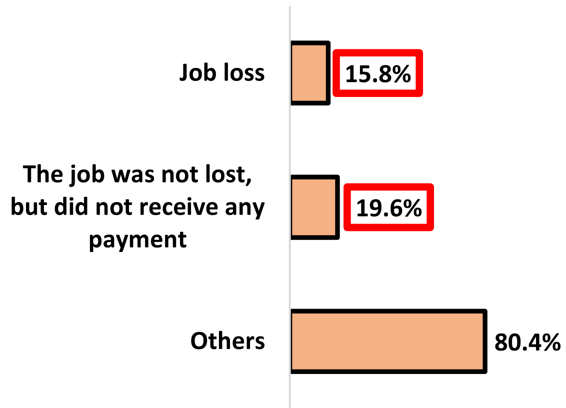


Figure 26: Reasons for reverse migration



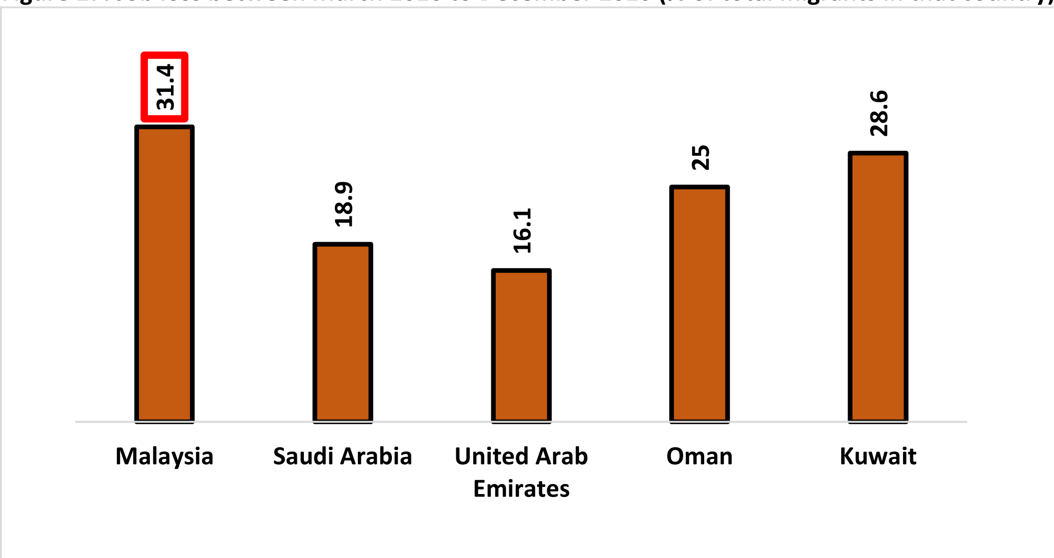
Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

6.3 Experience of international migrants during COVID-19

Bangladesh's 10 million international migrant workers have been contributing to the country's economic development while ensuring the welfare of millions who depend on them. Our sample includes 273 international migrants, out of which 58.6% are based in middle eastern nations, where 28% work in construction, 16% in manufacturing and 10% in wholesale and retail trade. However, COVID-19 resulted in the job loss of 20% of international migrants, primarily in the craft and trades and elementary occupations. Thus, 5% of the workers returned to Bangladesh.

Since the pandemic triggered a global economic crisis, many Bangladeshi foreign migrant workers lost their jobs in March-December 2020 (Figure 27). The majority of migrants reported losing their jobs in Malaysia (31.4%), followed by Kuwait (28.6%), Oman (25%) and Saudi Arabia (19%).

Figure 27: Job loss between March 2020 to December 2020 (% of total migrants in that country)



Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

6.4 Experience of 'Aspiring' migrants during COVID-19

Those who want to migrate cited better job opportunities (90%) and lack of opportunity (31%) as the major reasons behind it. Few cited educational facilities, social status, and infrastructural facilities as other reasons for desiring to migrate. Among the aspiring migrants, 52% are secondary education passed. Those who planned to migrate abroad cited a halt in visa processing and increased charge of recruiting agencies as the main obstacles to migration. Moreover, they mentioned multiple reasons such as increased travel expense, complexity in visa procedure, ban on recruiting etc as barriers to migration.

During the pandemic, the aspiring foreign migrants encounter several issues (Figure 28). A higher number (28.6%) of aspiring migrants claimed they were unable to move because the visa application procedure was halted. Additionally, 12.5% and 23.2% of them, respectively, cited rising travel costs and recruiting agency fees as the biggest barriers to migration.

Figure 28: Problems obstructing international migration

Source: SANEM employment survey, 2021

Section VII: Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Although COVID-19 was mainly a health hazard, the lockdown that was put in place as a measure to flatten the rise in contagion resulted in serious economic crises around the world. The situation was no different for Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, a large number of people, particularly female workers, experienced permanent or temporary job loss as well as considerable income reductions. Moreover, a lot of migrant workers were fired and sent back to Bangladesh and aspiring migrants had to halt their travel plans. This made the ongoing crisis in Bangladesh's labour market worse. Despite the severe effects of the pandemic, the economy is progressively rebounding. It is, therefore, critical to understanding the dynamics of the labour market in the pre-and post-COVID-19 to promote inclusive economic growth in compliance with the SDG agenda, the 8th Five Year Plan (8FYP), and the Government of Bangladesh's Vision 2021.

Against this backdrop, the core objective of the study is to investigate the dynamics of the labour market in both the pre-COVID and post-COVID contexts. The study provides a special focus on internal and external migration and identifies the issues that domestic and foreign migrant workers face. Moreover, the study attempts to explore the current scenario of economic recovery from the COVID-induced economic shock. In this regard, two surveys—one done in 2018 and the other in 2021—were used to produce this research.

In 2018, SANEM, in collaboration with the General Economic Division (GED), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Bangladesh, conducted a nationally representative survey of 10,500 households. The sample was collected using 500 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs), which were scattered across all eight divisions and 64 districts. Poverty, income, and employment (PIE), as well as migration, remittances, and other basic household characteristics, were all included in the study. In 2021, the study took a slightly different approach to survey both non-migrant and migrant households. The study approached all migrant households from the household survey of 2018. Nonetheless, for the non-migrant households, the study followed the same sampling framework in line with the 2018 survey.

Data was collected over the phone between January-February 2021. Household heads or other members of the same households who had previously participated in the survey were questioned. The survey included separate sections for non-migrants and migrants. Questions on employment and income were incorporated for the non-migrant section (households with no migrant member). Moreover, the survey had separate sections for migrant households (households with migrant members) as well as for those households where we have members who are interested to migrate ('aspiring'). To capture the overall situation of work and income between pre-Covid and post-Covid periods, data on respondents' income, employment, migration, remittances, and experiences with COVID-19 were collected. A total of 2845 non-migrants, 230 internal migrants, and 273 international migrants were surveyed. The survey had a 19% non-response rate (due to network issues, language barriers, wrong numbers, etc.) and a 5% decline rate.

The survey shows that, from March to December 2020, both self-employed and wage-employed were adversely affected by the pandemic but not equally. Of the self-employed workers, most faced a decrease in production, sales or profits, followed by more than half facing temporary business closure. On the other hand, more than half the wage employed workers experienced a decrease in salary among others. When it comes to gender, it can be inferred that women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic as they are highly engaged in health and care work. In the case of location, people in rural areas faced the highest decrease in income. The respondents in the Sylhet division encountered the most decrease in income followed by Barisal and Mymensingh. Among the major sectors, respondents in the transportation sector faced the highest decrease in income followed by construction and manufacturing (RMG). Due to the income shocks, unemployment/job loss rose significantly across Bangladesh during March-December 2020. The urban region faced the highest loss of jobs. At the division level, Barisal experienced the highest job loss and Khulna experienced the lowest job loss. During the same time period, decreased production/sales/profit was also observed. Among the major sectors, respondents in the wholesale and retail trade sector faced the most decrease in production, sales, and profit followed by the transportation sector, and the hotel and restaurant sector. The survey also covers the dynamics of income for both self-employed and wage employed by major sectors between December 2019 and December 2020, showing the self-employed workers in the hotel and restaurant sector faced the highest drop in income, while wage employed in the construction and the transportation experienced the highest drop in income.

The survey also incorporates the recovery scenarios of the labour market from the COVID-19 induced income shocks. Among the wage employed, a higher percentage (39.3%) of workers in wholesale and retail trade, as well as construction (34.3%), said that their income declined between March and December 2020, but that they already returned to the December 2019 income level. A greater percentage of self-employed respondents in health and social work (51.5%), the wholesale and retail sector (50.2%) and the manufacturing sector (44.6%) among others reported a reduction in income from March to December 2020, albeit they already returned to pre-COVID level income (income in December 2019).

Moreover, Dhaka-based employment was severely affected. More than half of the wage employed experienced a decrease in their income during March-December 2020, followed by permanent job loss, and change in professions among others. In contrast, most of the self-employed faced a reduction in production, sales or profit, followed by temporary business closure among others. When looking at income recovery, 30.1% of self-employed people in Dhaka said that their income decreased but recovered, as opposed to 42.5% of wage-employed. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-employed people were more severely affected by the pandemic than those who worked for wages.

Bangladeshi migrants are employed in many countries. The largest percentage of the international migrant workers are employed in Saudi Arabia, followed by Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates among others. On the other hand, internal migrants are mostly employed in Dhaka followed by Gazipur and Narayanganj among others. The sample contains 230 internal migrants, out of which 66.5% are working in Dhaka, 20% work in RMG and 13.5% work in wholesale and retail trade. However, 49% of surveyed migrants returned to their village due to multiple reasons such as losing employment, a decrease in salary, or could not to afford expenses. From March-December 2020, 14% of internal migrants lost jobs. Those who lost jobs were mostly employed in craft-related trade.

Out of the 273 international migrants, 58.6% are based in middle eastern nations, where 28% work in construction, 16% in manufacturing and 10% in wholesale and retail trade. However, COVID-19 resulted in the job loss of 20% of international migrants, primarily in the craft and trades and elementary occupations. Around 5% of the workers returned to Bangladesh.

Those who want to migrate cited better job opportunities (90%) and lack of opportunity (31%) as the major reasons behind it. Few cited educational facilities, social status, and infrastructural facilities as other reasons for desiring to migrate. Among the aspiring migrants, 52% are secondary education passed. Those who planned to migrate abroad cited a halt in visa processing and increased charge of recruiting agencies as the main obstacles to migration. Moreover, they mentioned multiple reasons such as increased travel expense, complexity in visa procedure, ban on recruiting etc as barriers to migration.

The following suggestions can be utilized to address the challenges of the labour market during the COVID-19 pandemic: (i) identifying those sectors that have not been able to recover (construction, transportation, hotel and restaurant etc.) is essential; (ii) it is crucial to consider separate incentives with minimal conditionality towards those who have not recovered; (iii) with the self-employed experiencing slower recovery, they should be in policy focus; (iv) policies towards smooth migration through diplomatic negotiations and reducing the cost of migration should be emphasized; (v) strategies to integrate the return migrants in the domestic market should be given importance; (vi) increased emphasis is needed towards incorporating safety net based skill development and employment generation schemes; (vii) increased emphasis is needed towards incorporating safety net based skill development and employment generation.

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SANEM: Employment Survey on COVID-19 Impacts in Bangladesh

Survey Code					Enumerator ID No.				Date of Survey		
PSU No.			Household No.								

Region	Code	
Name (respondent) & Mobile No.		
Name (Mobile No. of other member)		
Division		
District		
Thana/Upazila		
Union/Ward		
Mouza/ Neighbourhood		
Village/ Municipality / City Corporation		
Survey Condition	**Code**	1. Interested 2. Not Interested 3. Respondent not found
Enumerator (Interviewer)		**Name:**

Purpose of the Survey
The purpose of this survey is to collect data on the impact of COVID-19 on labour force participation, employment, and migration

Confidentiality:
All information collected from this survey is confidential and will be used for research only. Participating in this survey solely depends on your will and you can refuse to take part in this survey at the beginning of the survey or at any time during the survey if you wish. If you do not know the answer to a question or feel uncomfortable answering a question, you can avoid it.

For Detailed Information
SANEM (South Asian Network on Economic Modeling)
Flat K-5, House 1/B, Road 35, Gulshan 2
Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
Phone: +88 02 58813075

Section 1: Information on the workers

Profile of the workers in the household: For all members who are CURRENTLY working/worked ANYTIME during the PAST ONE YEAR/ Searching for work (Unemployed) (aged 5 years or more)

Individual ID Code (as in HH roster)	Serial No.	1. Name of the Household members	2. Sex 1. Male 2. Female	3. Relationship of members with the head of the household 1 Head 2 Husband/wife 3 Son/Daughter 4 Spouse of Son 5 Souse of daughter 6 Grandchild 7 Father/ Mother 8 Sister/ Brother 9 Nephew/ Niece 10 Other relative (specify) 11 Household help 12 Employee 13 Others (specify)	4. Age Write age in full years.	5. Marital status 1. Currently Married 2. Never Married 3. Widowed 4. Divorced 5. Separated	7. What was the highest class that you passed? 1. No class passed 2. Class 1 3. Class 2 4. Class 3 5. Class 4 6. Class 5 7. Class 6 8. Class 7 9. Class 8 10. Class 9 11. SSC/Dakhil/equivalent 12. HSC/Alim/equivalent 13. Graduate/Bachelor/Fazil/equivalent 14. Post graduate/Masters/ Kamil/equivalent 15. Medical/ Engineering 16. Vocational 17. Technical 18. Nursing / Diploma 19. PhD 20. Kowmi/ Hafezia 95 Others (specify) -99 Don't know	8. What are the trainings did you receive in the last two year? 0. No Training (>>**Q10**) 1. Technical and Vocational Training 2. Craftsman, handicraft and cottage work 3. Construction related works 4. Agricultural crop production and preservation 5. Non-crop agricultural activities 6. Driving and motor mechanic 7. Tourism 8. Foreign Language Training 9. Nursing 10. Catering, Hotel and Restaurant 11. Ready Made Garments 12. Computer 95. Others (Specify) 99. Don't know **Please specify the area/type of your training (At most 4)**					9. What is the duration of the training? 1 = less than 1 week 2 = 1 to 2 weeks 3 = 3 to 4 weeks 4 = 1 to 3 months 5= 4 to 6 months 6= more than 6 months **Please fill up the boxes corresponding to question no.8**			10. What is your employment status? 1=Active Employment 2=Paid leave 3=Temporarily laid off 4=Unemployed
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Section 2: Wage and salary (Applicable for the household's members aged 5 years and above) (If there is more than one job, use the next row)
If Q1=2 for all members, go to the next section

Individual ID Code (as in HH roster)	Serial No.	1. Did you do any work **for wage, salary or in kind, even if only for 1 hour in last 7 days?** (excluding domestic work) (Examples: A regular job, contractual job, part-time job, work in exchange for food or housing, day laborer in agriculture, day laborer in non-agriculture etc.) **(Employee, laborer, domestic workers)** 1 Yes 2 **No>> Next person** 3 Absent temporarily and will return to work (due to illness or some other reasons	2. Where do you work? (Examples: Computer shop, Agricultural land, Primary School, Office, Market, House, Coaching centre, mobile shop, transportation etc.)	3. Industry Code (BSIC – 4 Digits)	4. What is your job title/designation? (Examples: Farmer, Rickshaw puller, fisherman, primary school teacher, food seller, coaching teacher etc.)	5. Occupation code (BSCO-4 Digit)	6. What is the nature of your current occupation? 1 Paid employee 2 Day laborer (Agriculture) 3 Day laborer (Non-Agriculture) 4 Apprentice/intern/ trainee (if paid) 5 Domestic worker 95 Others (specify)	7. How many days in a week do you work now? **(Number of days)**	8. How many days did you work in a week a year ago? **(In December 2019)** **(Number of days, write 00 if not employed)**	9. What was your salary in **December** 2019? **[If not in employed/in labour force, write 00]**	10. What is your salary in **December 2020**?
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Section 2: Wage and salary (Continued)

Individual ID Code (as in HH roster)	Serial No.	11. How did your income change during the last nine months (from March 2020)? 1=Increased 2= remained the same 3=Decreased if option 3 is selected then >>> **Q12**	12. In which month your salary was lowest in the last nine months since April 2020? 1= April 2=May 3=June 4=July 5=August 6= September 7= October 8= November 9=December (In case of more than one month please mention the first one)	13. In the mentioned month what was your monthly salary? (In BDT)	14. Did you change your profession in the last nine months (Since March 2020)? 1. Yes 2. No **(>> next section**	15. How many times did you change your job from March 2020?	16. What was your major occupation since March 2020 prior to the current one? (Description of the previous occupation)	17. Previous occupation code (BSCO 4 digit)	18. Industry Code (BSIC 4 digit)	19. Why did you change your profession? 1) Lost job 2) Due to lack of opportunities 3) Increased competitions 4) Wage is low 5) Wage was cut 6) Was forced to change the profession. 7) For better opportunities 8) Others, specify (multiple answers are applicable)	20. Did you ever remain in a position where you were unemployed (jobless and searching for a job and not getting one) during the period of job switching? 1. Yes 2. **No (>>next section)**	21. How long were you unemployed (jobless and searching for a job and not getting one before switching to new job)? *In days* *[If reported in months, convert that to days.* *1 month = 30 days]*
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Section 3: Self-employment (**Applicable for the household's members aged 5 years and above**) **(If there is more than one job, use the next row)**
If Q1 = 2 for all members then skip to next section

Individual ID Code (as in HH roster)	Serial No.	1. Do you have any kind of business/farm, or with one or more partners? (Examples: commercially livestock or poultry rearing, fishing, flower or fruit garden, agricultural production, departmental store, transportation, hotel business/ handloom owner, tailor and so on) **(Self-employed)** 1 Yes 2 **No>> Next Person** 3 Absent temporarily and will return to work	2. What is the status of your involvement in this farm /business? 1. Employer in agriculture (Self-employed with paid employee) 2. Employer in non-agriculture (Self-employed with paid employee) 3. Self-employed (Agriculture) 4. Self-employed (Non-Agriculture)	3. What are the main goods or services produced or traded? (For example - computers are sold/ hotel business/tailoring/weaving, rice/wheat/vegetables are produced, shirts are made, bricks are made etc.) (multiple answers applicable)	4.Industry Code BSIC 4 digit	5. How many employees are employed in the business/ farm? 1. Only myself 2. Me and my family members 3. <10 persons 4. 10-24 persons 5. 25-99 persons 6. 100-249 7. 250+	6. How many employees were employed in the business/farm about a year ago (on or before December 2019)? 1. Only myself 2. Me and my family members 3. <10 persons 4. 10-24 persons 5. 25-99 persons 6. 100-249 7. 250+ [*If the business did not exist in the previous year, write '0'*]	7. What kind of problems did you face doing business since March 2020? 1= Decrease in sales 2= Decrease in production 3= Decrease in profit 4= laid off workers 5= had to change the business 6=Others, mention If the business does not exist now, put 0	8. What was your Gross Income (profit) for the month of December? (Gross Income per month excluding all expenses) (Taka) If the business does not exist now, put 00	9. What was your Gross Income (profit) for month a year ago (On the month of December 2019)? (Gross Income per month excluding all expenses) (Taka) If business did not exist last year, write '0'	10. Have you halted your business since March, 2020? 1=Yes 2=**No (next section)**	11. What was the reason for the business to halt? 1= Due to lockdown 2=Due to lack of demand 3= Due to increased cost of production 4= Due to fall in price 5= Due to COVID related additional cost 6=Others, mention (multiple answers are applicable)
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Section 4: Unemployment (Unemployed person only) (**Applicable for the household's members aged 5 years and above**)

Is there any member of your family who is currently not working/ out of employment? (Applicable for family members aged 5 years or older) (Not applicable to students)
1. Yes
2. No >> Next section

Individual ID Code (as in HH roster)	Serial No.	1. Did you look for work during the last 1 month? 1 Yes 2 No (Q>>3)	2. Were you available for work in the last 7 days? 1 Yes 2 No (>> Next section)	3. How long have you been looking for work? 1) 0-1 month 2) 1-3 months 3) 3-6 months 4) 6-12 months 5) More than 1 year	4. Were you previously employed before the pandemic (March 2020)? 1. Yes and wage employed (**>> Q5**) 2. Yes, self-employed **(>>Q6**) 3. **No (next section)**	5. Why did you stop doing that job? 1 Dismissed/fired 2 Temporary job ended 3 Health reason 4 Low wage 5 Previous job wasn't good 6 Marriage 7 Started education 95 Other (multiple answers are applicable)	6. Did you run a business? 1. Yes 2. No **(next section)**	7. Why did you wind up the business? 1=Incurred no profit 2= Due to lack of demand 3= Due to excessive loss 4= Due to high price of the raw materials 5= Due to lockdown 6=Others, mention (multiple answers are applicable)
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Section: 5 Migration

Has any member of your household migrated, either within the country or abroad?

1 Yes

2 No **(>>Section6)**

Individual ID Code (Migrant individuals)	Serial No.	1. Name	2. Gender 1)Male 2)Female	3. Age	4. Marital Status 1. Currently Married 2. Never Married 3. Widowed 4. Divorced 5. Separated	5. Where is he/she working? 1. In country (**Q3**) 2. Abroad >>**Q4**	6. If in-country write zila code.	7. If abroad write country code.	8. For how long has he/she been living outside the country or other district?		9.Level of Education of the migrant worker 1 No class passed 2 Class 1 3 Class 2 4 Class 3 5 Class 4 6 Class 5 7 Class 6 8 Class 7 9 Class 8 10 Class 9 11 SSC/equivalent 12 HSC/equivalent 13 Graduate/Bachelor/equivalent 14 Post graduate/Masters/ equivalent 15 Medical 13 Engineering Professional 14 Technical 15 Nursing / Diploma 16 PhD 17 Kowmi/ Hafezia 95 Others (specify 18 99 Don't know	10. Has he been working since March? 1.Yes 2.**No (>>Q14)**	11.Occupation **If the occupation is not known then write "00"**	
									Year	Month			**Description** **(Designation, Type and Responsibility) (If not known, type (-9))**	Occupation Code
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Section: 5 Migration (Cont.)

Individual ID Code (Migrant Individuals)	Serial No.	12. Industry code (BSIC 4 digit)	13. How much money has the household received from him, since March?	14. How did you spend the remittance since March? **(See Code)**	15. Due to Covid-19 (after February 2020), did he/she lose job? Yes=1, No=2	16. What was his previous job? **Description** **(Designation, Type and Responsibility) (If not known, type (-9))**	17.Previous Occupation Code	18. Industry code (BSIC 4 digit)	19. How much did he earn before he lost the job? (In BDT)	20. After the lockdown (from March till date) did he/she come back to the village/home? 1. Yes (**Q>>21**) 2. No	21. What was the reason for returning? **See codes** **Multiple responses are possible**	22. Has he/she returned? 1. Yes **(>> Q23)** 2. No	23. Why did he/she return back? 1. Got his/her job back, 2. Got a new job, 3. Went to search for a new job (with family), 4. Went back but without family; 5. others (**multiple answers are applicable)** **>> Next person**
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(Section 5) Codes Q14
1. Food and clothing 2. Education 3. Health 4. Marriage 5. Construction of residential/non-residential structures 6. Major repair and maintenance work of residential/non-residential structures 7. Purchase of land/mortgaged in 8. Purchase of residential/commercial space 9. Purchase of agricultural machineries and equipment 10. Purchase of transport machineries and equipment (for commercial purposes) 11. Repayment for past borrowing 12. Major repair and maintenance of machineries and equipment 13. Business (other than transport machineries and equipment) 14. Agricultural purpose without machinery 15. Other investment expenditures (specify) 16. Expenditure for consumer durables 17. Savings

(Section 5) Codes for Q21
1. Job loss, 2. Ran out of savings, 3. Could not pay rent, 4. Could not buy food, 5. Out of fear /panic, 6. Family pressure, 7. had intention to settle in the village permanently, 8. the job was not lost, but did not receive any payment, 9. decrease in wage/salary, 10. Others (Please specify)

Section: 6: Returnee Migrants

Has any member of your household returned and currently staying at home?

1 Yes

2. No **(>> Next Section)**

Individual ID Code (as in HH roster)	Serial No.	1. From where have you come back home? 1. In country (**Q2**) 2. Abroad >>**Q3**	2 If in-country write zila code.	3. If abroad write country code.	4. When did you return back?		5. Do you think of getting back again in near future (next six months)? 1.Yes **(>>6)** 2.No	6. Why can you not return? **See the codes** **Multiple responses are possible**
					Month	**Year**		
								1= Not getting a visa after paying for it 2= The visa processing stopped 3= The host country/area is not taking more labours 4= the traveling expenses have increased drastically 5= Recruiting agencies charge increased drastically 6= Work permit duration will be expired 7= Due to complications to submit the COVID-19 test report 8= Others- please specify
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Section: 7 Migration: Aspiring Migrants

Do any member of your household has planned to migrate within the country or abroad?

1 Yes

2 No (>> End the interview)

Individual ID Code (as in HH roster)	Serial No.	1. Where are you planning to migrate? 1. In country (>>**Q2**) 2. Abroad >>**Q3**	2 If in-country write zila code.	3. If abroad write country code.	4. Why do you want to migrate? (Migration decision) 1. For better job opportunity 2. Lack of job opportunity in the village, 3. For child's education, 4. For infrastructural facilities (better housing etc), 5. For social status; 6. Others- please specify; (multiple answers applicable)	6. Name of the work (Occupation) that you are planning to do **If the occupation is not known then write "00"**		7. Industry code (BSIC 4 digit)	8. What kind of problem are you facing to migrate? 1= Not getting a visa after paying for it 2= The visa processing stopped 3= The host country/area is not taking more labours 4= the traveling expenses have increased drastically 5= Recruiting agencies charge increased drastically 6= Work permit duration will be expired 7= Due to complications to submit the COVID-19 test report 8= Others- please specify **(multiple answers are applicable)**
						Description **(Designation, Type and Responsibility) (If not known, type (-9))**	Occupa tion Code		
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Zila code							
1	BAGERHAT	32	GAIBANDHA	54	MADARIPUR	76	PABNA
3	BANDARBAN	33	GAZIPUR	55	MAGURA	77	PANCHAGARH
4	BARGUNA	35	GOPALGANJ	56	MANIKGANJ	78	PATUAKHALI
6	BARISAL	36	HABIGANJ	58	MAULVIBAZAR	79	PIROJPUR
9	BHOLA	39	JAMALPUR	57	MEHERPUR	82	RAJBARI
10	BOGRA	41	JESSORE	59	MUNSHIGANJ	81	RAJSHAHI
12	BRAHMANBARIA	42	JHALOKATI	61	MYMENSINGH	84	RANGAMATI
13	CHANDPUR	44	JHENAIDAH	64	NAOGAON	85	RANGPUR
15	CHITTAGONG	38	JOYPURHAT	65	NARAIL	87	SATKHIRA
18	CHUADANGA	46	KHAGRACHHARI	67	NARAYANGANJ	86	SHARIATPUR
19	COMILLA	47	KHULNA	68	NARSINGDI	89	SHERPUR
22	COX'S BAZAR	48	KISHOREGONJ	69	NATORE	88	SIRAJGANJ
26	DHAKA	49	KURIGRAM	70	CHAPAINABABGANJ	90	SUNAMGANJ
27	DINAJPUR	50	KUSHTIA	72	NETRAKONA	91	SYLHET
29	FARIDPUR	51	LAKSHMIPUR	73	NILPHAMARI	93	TANGAIL
30	FENI	52	LALMONIRHAT	75	NOAKHALI	94	THAKURGAON

Country Code					
1	Saudi Arabia	10	United Arab Emirates	19	Sweden
2	Qatar	11	Canada	20	Federation of Russia
3	Kuwait	12	Australia	21	Italy
4	Oman	13	U.K.	22	Other European Country
5	Malaysia	14	USA	23	Brunei
6	Singapore	15	Korea (South)	24	Mauritius
7	Iraq	16	Japan	25	South Africa
8	Iran	17	Turkey	26	Others (specify)
9	Libya	18	Germany		

SANEM, launched in January 2007 in Dhaka, is a non-profit research organization registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms in Bangladesh. It is also a network of economists and policymakers with a special emphasis on economic modeling. SANEM aims to promote objective and high quality research in the areas of international trade, macroeconomy, poverty, labour market, environment, political economy and economic modeling. SANEM contributes to government policy-making by providing research supports both at individual and organizational capacities. SANEM has maintained strong research collaboration with global, regional and local think-tanks, research and development organizations, universities, and individual researchers. SANEM arranges regular training programs on economic modeling and contemporary economic issues.

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