



**IMPACTS, CONSEQUENCES AND RESPONSES TO
COVID-19 IN BANGLADESH
A HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH**



North South University



SIPG

**South Asian Institute of Policy
and Governance**



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Coronavirus (Covid-19) is an emerging security threat for humankind. Millions of people have already been infected and several hundred thousand died from Covid-19 across the world. The death rate is alarming and changing every day. The pandemic is now being compared to a war. We do not yet have an effective vaccine or proven treatment, and the development of a vaccine may take a year or longer. This unprecedented situation reminds us how helpless we are to the nature and this non-traditional threat.

To prevent this pandemic and slowdown the transmission of this virus, the only option remaining is maintaining social distance including home quarantine, bans on public event, school and university closure and even local or national lockdowns which has ultimately severely affect the economic security, food security, individual security, political security, migration & remittance sector, education sector and so on. It is predicated that a global economic recession is unavoidable and millions of people would die due to poverty, food crisis and famine in the years coming. “The United Nations’ World Food Programme (WFP) warned that without urgent action and funding, hundreds of millions of people will face starvation and millions could die as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.” As a whole, this pandemic has become a ‘human security’ concern. Thus, it requires a human security approach to address and mitigate the insecurities.

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1. *This concept note is drafted by M Jashim Uddin, PhD, Coordinator of CPS with the assistance of Md. Shahidul Haque, Senior Fellow, SIPG, NSU.*
 2. *World Food Programme warns: COVID-19 pandemic will cause “famines of biblical proportions” available at <https://www.wfs.org/en/articles/2020/04/23/hung-a23.html>*



Human Security

“freedom from fear and freedom from want”



Human security is comparatively a new term. The United Nation Development Program (UNDP) coined the term for the first time in 1994. There is no single internationally agreed definition of human security available. The 1994 UN Human Development Report emphasized that ‘for most people, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the threat of a cataclysmic world event. Will they and their families have enough to eat? Will they lose their jobs? Will their streets and neighbourhoods be safe from crime? Will they be tortured by a repressive state? Will they become a victim of violence because of their gender? Will their religion or ethnic origin target them for persecution?’

In a resolution in September 2012, the UN General Assembly agreed that human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people. Based on this, a common understanding on the idea of human security includes the following:



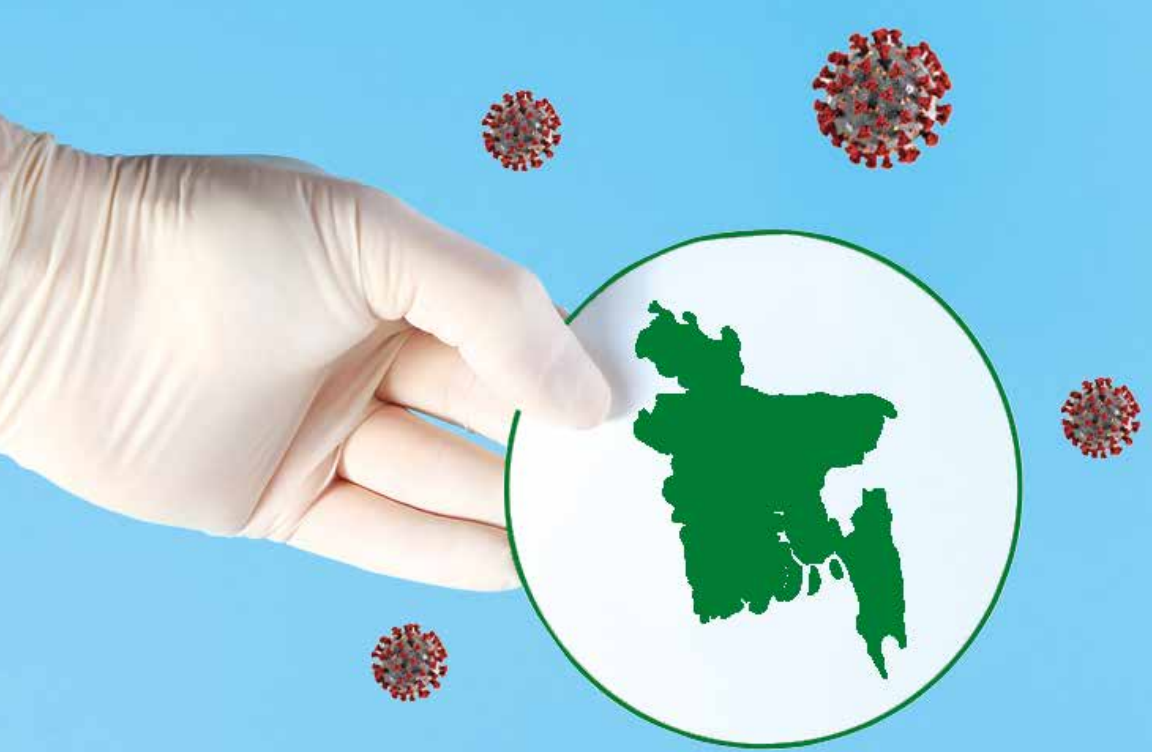
- (a) The right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential;



- (b) Human security calls for people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities;



- (c) Human security recognizes the interlinkages between peace, development and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.



” In Bangladesh, hundreds of people have died from the Coronavirus and thousands have already been infected, and every day the numbers are increasing at an alarming rate.

For the short and long-term responses to COVID-19 pandemic, human security approach addressing any insecurities that jeopardize individual life is vital. Traditionally, in the third world or the developing world, state security or border security has been given priority for national security, but individual security (individual rights and needs) has been ignored. North Korea can be referred to as an ideal example where the people are not free from fear and want/hunger.

In Bangladesh, hundreds of people have died from the Coronavirus and thousands have already been infected, and every day the numbers are increasing at an alarming rate. Millions of people are already jobless. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina recently shared her concerns that the country might face famine. Already millions are starving. At the international level, a global united platform is not clearly visible to fight against Covid-19. The role of the World Health Organization (WHO) is being criticized by the U.S. and its allies. The tug of war between the two super powers, the U.S. and China, about the origin of COVID-19 is being witnessed. Under this situation, what would be the geopolitics in the region in the coming days? The bilateral trade, investment, remittance, and aid from the partners are vital for the survival and development of Bangladesh. Therefore, the responses from the partners and member states to COVID-19 are also vital.





Under this circumstance, the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) is planning to organize a virtual conference titled “Impacts, Consequences and Responses to COVID-19 in Bangladesh: A Human Security Approach.” The purpose of the conference is to identify the drivers of the insecurities affecting human life, and analyze the consequences and responses at the government level, the international level and civil society/NGOs level to mitigate those insecurities. Based on the findings, CPS will provide concrete policy recommendations to the concerned ministries/departments on how to tackle the insecurities/challenges in an integrated manner. CPS will take initiatives to publish policy briefs and an edited book based on the papers presented.



Themes of the Virtual Conference:



Health and Well-being

Speaker: **Professor Ahmed Hossain**
Director, Global Health Institute
North South University

Livelihood and Business
Speaker: **Professor Mustafizur Rahman**
Distinguished Fellow
Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD)



Education & Skill Development

Speaker: **Professor Atiqul Islam**
Vice Chancellor
North South University

Agriculture and Food Security
Speaker: **Anwar Faruque**
Former Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
Bangladesh Government



Geopolitics of Covid-19
Speaker: **Md. Shahidul Haque**
Senior Fellow, SIPG
North South University



2nd VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Date: 09 July 2020

Time: 11:00 am to 12:30 pm



Themes of the Virtual Conference:



Poverty and Inequality

Speaker: **Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur**

Executive Director

Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)

Migration and Remittance

Speaker: **Ambassador Shahidul Haque**

Senior Fellow, SIPG

North South University



Covid-19 and the Generational Divide

Speaker: **Professor Helal Mohiuddin**

Member, CPS

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