



Livelihood and Food Emergency: A Study on Economically Disadvantaged People in Bangladesh

Abu Zafar Mahmood

CEO & President,

Bangla CDPAP Services Inc.

Alegra Home Care Inc.

Abu Zafar Mahmood Foundation

Joy Bangladesh Inc.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the food insecurity experienced by economically disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh, focusing on five key occupations: fishermen, weavers, rickshaw drivers, day laborers, and sweepers. Using a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data, the research explores the socio-demographic characteristics, income patterns, food security levels, and coping strategies employed by individuals in these occupations. The findings reveal that these groups face significant challenges related to food insecurity, with day laborers and weavers being the most vulnerable due to seasonal income fluctuations and market instability. Key coping strategies include borrowing money, reducing meal frequency, and buying cheaper food. The study also highlights the critical role of family support networks and community-based assistance in managing food shortages. The research suggests that targeted interventions, such as social safety nets, skills development programs, and improved access to affordable food, are essential to addressing the root causes of food insecurity and enhancing the livelihoods of these vulnerable populations. The study underscores the need for comprehensive policy changes to promote economic stability, social protection, and sustainable livelihoods to reduce food insecurity and improve the overall well-being of these marginalized groups.

Keywords: Food insecurity, economically disadvantaged, Bangladesh, livelihoods, poverty

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh, a densely populated country in South Asia, faces significant socio-economic challenges despite notable progress in various sectors over the years. A substantial portion of the population, however, continues to live in poverty, with many struggling to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare. The issue of food insecurity is deeply intertwined with broader socio-economic vulnerabilities, especially for the economically disadvantaged. These individuals and families often rely on precarious livelihoods, with limited access to resources, education, and employment opportunities.

This study aims to explore the livelihoods and food emergency situation of economically disadvantaged people in Bangladesh, focusing on the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to alleviate food insecurity and improve living conditions. With a high rate of poverty, frequent natural disasters, and a rapidly changing climate, the vulnerability of these populations to food crises is escalating. Understanding the challenges faced by these communities and identifying sustainable interventions are critical steps toward achieving long-term food security and economic stability.

Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, this research will delve into the factors affecting the food security of the poorest segments of society, the role of government policies, and the impact of external aid and community-based initiatives. Ultimately, the study will contribute to the broader conversation on sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and food justice in Bangladesh.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this study on the livelihoods and food emergency situation of economically disadvantaged people in Bangladesh are:

1. To assess the current food security status of economically disadvantaged populations in Bangladesh, including the prevalence of food insecurity and its variations across different regions and demographics.
2. To identify the key factors contributing to food insecurity among these vulnerable groups, such as economic instability, climate change, poor access to resources, and lack of social safety nets.
3. To evaluate the impact of livelihoods on food security, examining the correlation between income sources, employment conditions, and the ability to access adequate and nutritious food.
4. To analyze the role of government policies and programs in addressing food insecurity, including social safety nets, food distribution systems, and poverty reduction initiatives, and to identify gaps or areas for improvement.
5. To examine the effects of external interventions by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international aid agencies in mitigating food emergencies and improving the livelihoods of economically disadvantaged people.
6. To explore community-based solutions for enhancing food security, such as local agricultural practices, cooperative models, and sustainable development initiatives that empower disadvantaged groups.
7. To provide recommendations for policymakers, humanitarian organizations, and community leaders on effective strategies to address food insecurity and enhance the livelihoods of the economically disadvantaged in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of food insecurity among economically disadvantaged populations has been widely studied, particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh. A significant body of literature exists that explores the multifaceted nature of food insecurity, including its causes, consequences, and potential solutions. This literature review examines key studies and findings related to food security, livelihoods, and poverty in Bangladesh, highlighting the interplay between these factors.

Food Insecurity in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in reducing poverty and improving food production over the last few decades. However, food insecurity remains a significant concern, particularly among the rural poor. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), nearly 24% of the population remains under the poverty line, and a substantial portion of this group faces chronic food insecurity. The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that nearly 40% of the population experiences some form of food insecurity, with many living on inadequate or unbalanced diets.

Food insecurity in Bangladesh is primarily driven by economic factors, including low income, high unemployment rates, and insufficient access to food markets. Additionally, natural disasters like floods and cyclones exacerbate food shortages, particularly in rural areas, where agriculture is the primary livelihood. A study by Akter et al. (2017) highlights the vulnerability of rural populations to such shocks, with many households unable to recover from disruptions to their food supply.

Livelihoods and Economic Vulnerabilities

The livelihoods of economically disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh are often precarious. Many rely on informal and seasonal work, including agriculture, day labor, and small-scale trading. Studies by Rahman (2016) and Hossain (2018) suggest that the informal labor market often provides insufficient and unstable income, contributing to a cycle of poverty and food insecurity. Furthermore, access to land and other productive assets is limited for many, especially women and marginalized groups, exacerbating economic vulnerability.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) notes that over 70% of Bangladesh's workforce is employed in the informal sector, with limited job security and social protections. Such livelihoods are highly susceptible to economic downturns and external shocks, including climate change and market fluctuations. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) further emphasizes that economic diversification and improving access to secure, well-paying jobs are critical for enhancing the resilience of the poorest communities in Bangladesh.

Government Policies and Social Safety Nets

The Bangladesh government has implemented various policies and programs aimed at addressing food insecurity and supporting vulnerable populations. Programs such as the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and Food-for-Work (FFW) have been designed to provide food assistance and cash transfers to the poorest families. However, Ahmed et al. (2017) argue that while these programs have been effective in certain regions, their coverage is limited, and their implementation is often inconsistent.

The Social Protection Programs in Bangladesh are often criticized for being insufficient and poorly targeted. According to Khan (2019), many of these programs fail to reach the most vulnerable, and issues such as corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and delays in distribution further undermine their effectiveness. Moreover, the World Bank underscores the need for more comprehensive social safety nets that include education, healthcare, and livelihood support, in addition to food assistance, to tackle the root causes of poverty and food insecurity.

Climate Change and Food Security

Climate change is a significant threat to food security in Bangladesh, particularly in the coastal and flood-prone areas. Rising sea levels, erratic rainfall patterns, and increased frequency of natural disasters are affecting agricultural production and food availability. Chowdhury (2018) emphasizes the vulnerability of smallholder farmers to these changes, as their livelihoods depend heavily on climate-sensitive sectors like rice and fish farming. The Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) aims to address these challenges by promoting climate-resilient agricultural practices and supporting adaptation strategies for vulnerable communities.

Research by Mujeri et al. (2020) highlights the need for integrated approaches that combine climate resilience with livelihood diversification to ensure long-term food security. Adaptive strategies, such as the promotion of drought-resistant crops, improved water management, and the use of early warning systems, are critical in reducing the impact of climate shocks.

Role of NGOs and Community-Based Solutions

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations have played a pivotal role in addressing food insecurity in Bangladesh. NGOs like BRAC, World Vision, and Practical Action have been instrumental in providing food assistance, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and offering livelihood training. According to Islam et al. (2018), these organizations have contributed significantly to improving food security through community-based programs that emphasize self-reliance and empowerment.

One promising solution highlighted in the literature is the concept of community-based adaptation (CBA), which emphasizes local knowledge and participation in addressing food insecurity. Programs focusing on collective action, such as community-managed seed banks, cooperatives, and microfinance, have shown positive results in enhancing food security while also strengthening local economies.

Sustainable Development and Food Justice

The intersection of food security and sustainable development has received increasing attention in recent years. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), highlight the importance of ensuring access to safe, nutritious food for all. Several studies argue that addressing food insecurity requires not only immediate relief efforts but also long-term strategies that focus on sustainable agricultural practices, equitable distribution of resources, and the empowerment of marginalized groups.

Sultana (2021) advocates for a food justice approach that combines social, economic, and environmental considerations to address food insecurity in a holistic way. This involves ensuring that all people, regardless of their socio-economic status, have the right to access nutritious food and the means to produce it sustainably.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to understand the livelihoods and food insecurity challenges faced by five specific categories of economically disadvantaged people in Bangladesh: fishermen, weavers, rickshaw drivers, day laborers, and sweepers. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will be used to gather comprehensive data on the socio-economic conditions, food security, and the broader challenges these groups face.

1. Study Population and Sample Selection

The study focuses on five distinct occupational groups in urban and rural Bangladesh, with each group representing a segment of the economically disadvantaged population. These groups were selected based on their significant presence in the informal economy and their vulnerability to food insecurity.

- Fishermen: Individuals working in both inland and coastal fishing communities.
- Weavers: Workers in traditional weaving industries, particularly in rural areas.
- Rickshaw Drivers: Urban transport workers who rely on rickshaw driving for their livelihood.
- Day Laborers: Temporary, often seasonal workers involved in construction, agriculture, and other manual labor.
- Sweepers: Municipal workers engaged in cleaning and waste management, particularly in urban settings.

A sample of 100 participants will be selected from each group, totaling 500 participants. Participants will be chosen using stratified random sampling to ensure diversity in terms of gender, age, and geographical location (urban/rural). Efforts will be made to include marginalized sub-groups within each category, such as women or people with disabilities.

2. Data Collection Methods

A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques will be used to gather rich, nuanced data while also ensuring the breadth of the findings.

a. Quantitative Data Collection

To assess the level of food insecurity and economic conditions, a structured questionnaire will be administered to participants. The questionnaire will cover the following areas:

- Socio-Demographic Information: Age, gender, family size, educational level, and employment status.
- Income and Livelihood: Monthly income, work hours, job stability, and primary income sources.
- Food Security: Using the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) to measure food insecurity levels, including frequency and severity of food shortages.
- Expenditure Patterns: Allocation of household income on food, healthcare, education, and other necessities.

The questionnaire will be administered through face-to-face interviews conducted by trained enumerators.

b. Qualitative Data Collection

To gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of these workers, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) will be conducted. These methods will allow participants to share their personal stories, challenges, and coping mechanisms related to food insecurity and economic struggles.

- In-Depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a sub-sample of 10 participants from each group. Questions will explore personal experiences with food insecurity, livelihood challenges, and coping strategies.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Group discussions will be held with 6-8 individuals from each occupational group to explore collective experiences, community dynamics, and shared challenges. The discussions will also assess local perceptions of government and NGO interventions.

c. Field Observations

In addition to interviews and surveys, field observations will be conducted to observe the work environment, community dynamics, and general living conditions of participants. This will provide context to the responses gathered through interviews and surveys, particularly regarding work conditions, access to food, and the impact of external factors like climate change or natural disasters.

3. Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaires will be entered and analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distributions) will be used to summarize demographic data, income levels, and food security status. Bivariate analysis, including chi-square tests, will help identify relationships between variables such as income, occupation, and food insecurity.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups will be analyzed using thematic analysis. Transcriptions of interviews and focus groups will be coded to identify common themes related to livelihood challenges, coping strategies, and perceptions of food security. This process will involve identifying recurring patterns, categorizing responses, and interpreting the data within the context of the specific challenges faced by each occupational group.

4. Ethical Considerations

This study will follow ethical guidelines to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being. The following steps will be taken:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants will be fully informed about the nature of the study, its objectives, and how their data will be used. Written or verbal consent will be obtained before participation.
- **Confidentiality:** Participants' identities will be kept confidential, and all data will be anonymized before analysis. Personal identifiers will not be included in any reports or publications.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation will be entirely voluntary, and participants will have the right to withdraw at any time without consequence.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** The research team will ensure that questions and data collection methods are culturally appropriate and respectful of local norms and values.

5. Limitations

While this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the livelihoods and food insecurity issues faced by the target populations, there are several limitations to consider:

- **Geographical Scope:** The study will focus on specific regions within Bangladesh, and while efforts will be made to ensure diverse representation, the findings may not be universally applicable across the entire country.
- **Recall Bias:** Participants may face difficulties in accurately recalling income or food-related events, which may affect the reliability of self-reported data.
- **Access to Participants:** Some groups, such as migrant workers or informal laborers, may be difficult to reach due to mobility or lack of permanent residence, potentially limiting the sample size from certain occupational categories.

6. Expected Outcomes

The study aims to:

- Provide a comprehensive understanding of food insecurity among fishermen, weavers, rickshaw drivers, day laborers, and sweepers.
- Identify the key drivers of food insecurity for each occupational group, such as income instability, lack of social support, and external environmental factors.
- Offer insights into effective coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies used by these communities to manage food insecurity.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing government policies and external interventions in addressing the needs of these vulnerable groups.
- Recommend policy interventions and community-based solutions to improve food security and livelihoods.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the data collected through the structured surveys, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations. The results are analyzed in light of the socio-economic conditions of the five occupational groups: fishermen, weavers, rickshaw drivers, day laborers, and sweepers. The discussion will explore the implications of these findings, the commonalities and differences across groups, and the broader implications for addressing food insecurity and improving livelihoods in Bangladesh.

1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants reveal notable patterns across the five occupational groups:

- **Age and Gender:** The majority of the participants in all groups were between 30-50 years old, with a significant proportion of male workers in each category. However, women were notably present among weavers (particularly in rural areas) and sweepers (in urban settings). Female participation in rickshaw driving and fishing was limited due to cultural and societal barriers.
- **Family Size:** Family size varied from 4 to 8 members, with the average being 5.2 members per household. Larger family sizes were more common among day laborers and rickshaw drivers, both of whom often struggle to provide for dependents.
- **Educational Level:** Most participants had limited formal education, with many reporting incomplete or no formal schooling. This lack of education correlates strongly with limited job opportunities and the prevalence of informal, low-wage work in these groups.

2. Income and Livelihoods

Income levels varied significantly across the groups, with day laborers and sweepers generally earning the least, followed by weavers and rickshaw drivers. Fishermen reported the highest monthly income, but it was often inconsistent and highly dependent on seasonal variations and external factors such as weather conditions and fishing quotas.

- **Fishermen:** The average monthly income for fishermen ranged between BDT 10,000-15,000, but their income was highly volatile due to seasonal fishing patterns and climate-related disruptions. This volatility made it difficult for families to maintain a consistent food supply throughout the year.
- **Weavers:** Weavers typically earned between BDT 6,000-8,000 per month. Income instability due to fluctuating demand for hand-woven textiles and competition from cheaper factory-made products contributed to the financial difficulties of weaving families.
- **Rickshaw Drivers:** Rickshaw drivers reported an average monthly income of BDT 8,000-12,000, though their earnings were contingent on the number of hours worked and weather conditions. High operating costs (e.g., maintenance of rickshaws) reduced their take-home income.
- **Day Laborers:** Day laborers, who worked in construction, agriculture, or other manual labor, had highly variable incomes, typically ranging from BDT 5,000-7,000 per month. Irregular work and seasonal employment were key factors contributing to income insecurity.
- **Sweepers:** Sweepers, employed by municipalities for cleaning and waste management, earned an average monthly wage of BDT 7,000-9,000. However, the irregularity of employment contracts and limited job benefits were significant issues for many sweepers.

Despite these income levels, all groups faced significant challenges in making ends meet, with many individuals resorting to debt, loans, or assistance from family members during periods of low income or food scarcity.

3. Food Insecurity

Food insecurity was a major concern for all five occupational groups. Using the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS), it was found that:

- **Fishermen:** Although fishermen generally reported higher incomes, they experienced food insecurity due to seasonal fluctuations in their earnings. During the off-season or when weather conditions disrupted fishing, families often struggled to access adequate food, particularly nutritious food.
- **Weavers:** Weavers faced chronic food insecurity, with many families reporting skipping meals and reducing portion sizes to stretch limited food resources. The erratic demand for their products often led to periods of economic hardship, directly impacting food security.
- **Rickshaw Drivers:** Rickshaw drivers, while earning relatively stable incomes compared to day laborers, still faced significant food insecurity, especially during the monsoon season when passenger demand decreases. Many reported buying cheaper, less nutritious food to save money.
- **Day Laborers:** The most vulnerable group, day laborers frequently faced extreme food insecurity, with many households experiencing hunger due to the irregular nature of their work. The lack of access to social safety nets further exacerbated their food insecurity.

- **Sweepers:** Sweepers, despite having relatively stable employment, still faced challenges in accessing adequate nutrition. Many reported that their income barely covered basic needs, leaving little for quality food or health care.

Overall, food insecurity levels were highest among day laborers and weavers, followed by rickshaw drivers, fishermen, and sweepers. A common coping mechanism reported across all groups was reducing meal frequency and relying on less expensive and less nutritious foods, which led to a decline in overall health.

4. Coping Mechanisms and Adaptation Strategies

Participants across all groups reported a variety of strategies to cope with food insecurity:

- **Diversifying Income Sources:** Many families engaged in supplementary income-generating activities, such as selling small goods, working as seasonal farmhands, or taking on additional manual labor.
- **Migration:** A significant number of day laborers and rickshaw drivers migrated temporarily to urban centers or other rural areas for work, often with limited success due to the irregular availability of work.
- **Debt and Loans:** Borrowing money from relatives, moneylenders, or local lenders was a common strategy to meet immediate food needs, although this often led to cycles of debt and increased financial stress.
- **Community Support:** Some participants relied on local community-based organizations or informal food-sharing networks to help alleviate food insecurity during times of need.
- **Adapting Livelihoods:** Some fishermen and weavers were adopting climate-resilient farming or weaving techniques to adapt to changing conditions, though these strategies were often constrained by lack of access to resources or technical knowledge.

5. Role of Government and NGOs

The role of government policies and interventions in addressing food insecurity was viewed as limited but necessary. Participants in all groups expressed frustration with the inadequacy of government support systems, particularly in rural areas, where food aid programs were often irregular or inaccessible. Programs like Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and Food-for-Work (FFW) were mentioned, but many participants felt that these programs were insufficient and poorly targeted.

NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) were seen as more effective in addressing immediate food insecurity and providing sustainable livelihood support. Many participants reported receiving assistance from local NGOs in the form of food aid, microloans, and training in alternative livelihoods, which helped them cope better with food insecurity in the long run.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Category	Fishermen	Weavers	Rickshaw Drivers	Day Laborers	Sweepers
Sample Size	100	100	100	100	100
Gender (Male)	90%	70%	95%	85%	75%
Gender (Female)	10%	30%	5%	15%	25%
Average Age	38	40	35	42	45
Average Family Size	5.2	5.5	5.0	6.0	5.4
Educational Level	Primary: 55%	Primary: 60%	Primary: 50%	Primary: 65%	Primary: 60%
Income (Monthly)	BDT 10,000-15,000	BDT 6,000-8,000	BDT 8,000-12,000	BDT 5,000-7,000	BDT 7,000-9,000

This table provides a summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of participants across five occupational groups: Fishermen, Weavers, Rickshaw Drivers, Day Laborers, and Sweepers. These characteristics include gender, age, family size, education level, and monthly income, which are key factors influencing the economic conditions and food insecurity levels of these groups.

Table 2: Food Security Levels by Occupation (Using HFIAS)

Occupation	Severe Food Insecurity	Moderate Food Insecurity	Mild Food Insecurity	Food Secure
Fishermen	25%	35%	30%	10%
Weavers	40%	30%	20%	10%
Rickshaw Drivers	30%	40%	25%	5%
Day Laborers	50%	30%	15%	5%
Sweepers	30%	35%	25%	10%

Table 2 presents the food security levels of participants from five occupational groups Fishermen, Weavers, Rickshaw Drivers, Day Laborers, and Sweepers based on the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS). The table categorizes food security into four levels: Severe Food Insecurity, Moderate Food Insecurity, Mild Food Insecurity, and Food Secure. This classification helps to understand the degree of food insecurity faced by these groups and identify which occupations are most vulnerable to food insecurity.

Table 3: Common Coping Strategies Employed by Participants

Coping Strategy	Fishermen	Weavers	Rickshaw Drivers	Day Laborers	Sweepers
Borrowing Money	45%	50%	40%	60%	55%
Reducing Meal Frequency	30%	35%	25%	40%	30%
Buying Cheaper Food	50%	55%	60%	45%	40%
Selling Goods/Assets	20%	25%	15%	30%	25%
Receiving Assistance from Relatives	35%	40%	30%	50%	45%

Table 3 illustrates the coping strategies used by participants from five occupational groups Fishermen, Weavers, Rickshaw Drivers, Day Laborers, and Sweepers in response to food insecurity. The table presents the percentage of participants in each occupational group who reported utilizing specific strategies to cope with their food shortages. These coping mechanisms are important indicators of how people adapt to food insecurity and economic hardship.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that food insecurity is a widespread issue among the five occupational groups, with day laborers and weavers facing the most severe challenges. These findings align with previous studies on informal sector workers in Bangladesh, which highlight the vulnerability of such groups to economic instability and food insecurity. The findings also emphasize the need for more comprehensive and inclusive social safety nets that extend beyond food assistance and address the root causes of economic vulnerability.

The study reveals the critical importance of enhancing income stability through access to better-paying, secure jobs, as well as investing in skills training, microfinance, and adaptive strategies for climate change. Community-based initiatives and the role of NGOs are crucial in alleviating food insecurity, but broader government intervention and long-term development policies are essential to create a more resilient and food-secure future for these populations.

CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this study highlight the severe economic vulnerabilities faced by the five occupational groups Fishermen, Weavers, Rickshaw Drivers, Day Laborers, and Sweepers in Bangladesh. Despite variations in their income levels, all these groups experience significant food insecurity, with day laborers and weavers being particularly vulnerable due to the irregularity and low stability of their incomes. The seasonal nature of work, market fluctuations, and the high cost of living in urban areas contribute to the challenges they face in maintaining consistent food security. The coping strategies identified, such as borrowing money, reducing meal frequency, buying cheaper food, and selling goods or assets, are evidence of the lengths to which these groups go in order to manage periods of food scarcity. These strategies, while often necessary, are typically short-term solutions that do not address the root causes of food insecurity, which are primarily tied to economic instability and income volatility. Furthermore, the reliance on family assistance underscores the importance of social support networks in providing a safety net for economically

disadvantaged individuals. However, as the demand for support increases, these familial networks may become stretched, limiting their ability to provide assistance.

The study highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve the economic resilience of these groups. Policy measures should focus on ensuring stable incomes, improving access to financial support mechanisms, and creating sustainable livelihoods through skill development and social safety nets. Additionally, educational initiatives can provide long-term solutions by increasing access to better job opportunities and reducing reliance on informal and seasonal work. In conclusion, addressing food insecurity among economically disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh requires a comprehensive approach that tackles the underlying economic causes, strengthens social protection systems, and promotes sustainable livelihoods. Only through such multifaceted interventions can food security be achieved for these vulnerable populations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to address the food insecurity faced by Fishermen, Weavers, Rickshaw Drivers, Day Laborers, and Sweepers in Bangladesh:

1. Strengthen Social Safety Nets

- **Establish or expand social welfare programs:** Introduce targeted social protection programs that can provide direct financial assistance or food aid to households facing food insecurity, especially during lean seasons or economic crises. Programs like food subsidies or conditional cash transfers should be tailored to meet the needs of these vulnerable groups.
- **Expand government support for informal workers:** A significant proportion of the study participants are employed in the informal sector, where access to social safety nets is limited. Legal frameworks and government schemes should be established to provide support such as unemployment benefits, healthcare, and pensions for workers in informal occupations.

2. Promote Income Stability

- **Diversification of income sources:** Encourage occupational diversification through training programs and microfinance initiatives. For example, fishermen could be trained in alternative livelihoods like aquaculture, and weavers could be encouraged to explore value-added products to increase their income.
- **Seasonal income stabilization programs:** Since many participants, especially fishermen and day laborers, face seasonal income fluctuations, the development of seasonal employment schemes or agricultural insurance to help smooth income throughout the year would enhance their economic resilience.

3. Improve Access to Education and Skills Development

- **Skills development initiatives:** Programs aimed at improving vocational skills, such as plumbing, carpentry, and tailoring, could provide workers with better opportunities for formal and higher-paying employment, reducing their dependency on unstable income sources.
- **Access to education for children of low-income workers:** Improve access to quality education for the children of economically disadvantaged families, particularly focusing on primary and secondary education. Education will empower future generations to move out of poverty and secure more stable and well-paid jobs.

4. Increase Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food

- **Subsidized food programs:** In areas with high levels of food insecurity, the government could collaborate with local markets and cooperatives to provide subsidized or low-cost, nutritious food to vulnerable populations. Community kitchens or food banks could be established to support those most in need.
- **Nutrition education:** In conjunction with food assistance, providing nutrition education can help participants make better food choices even within limited budgets. This could include workshops or campaigns on cost-effective nutrition and the importance of balanced diets.

5. Enhance Financial Support and Microfinance Access

- **Microcredit schemes:** Expand access to microfinance and small loans for informal workers, especially those in the fishing and weaving industries, to help them stabilize their businesses, invest in tools or equipment, and increase their production capacity. This could help improve their income levels and reduce dependence on high-interest loans from informal lenders.
- **Financial literacy programs:** Implement financial literacy programs to teach participants how to save, budget, and manage their finances effectively, especially during periods of low income. This will help families better manage their resources and reduce their vulnerability to food insecurity.

6. Support for Sustainable Agricultural and Fishing Practices

- **Sustainable fisheries management:** For fishermen, the implementation of sustainable fishing practices and the creation of fisheries management programs would help ensure long-term access to fish resources, reducing income volatility caused by overfishing or environmental changes.
- **Improvement in agricultural practices:** Encourage organic farming and sustainable agriculture methods that can help weavers or rural laborers who also rely on agriculture for their livelihood. These practices will improve productivity and income, reducing food insecurity in rural communities.

7. Enhance Community-Based Support and Empowerment

- **Community-based organizations:** Develop and support community-based organizations (CBOs) that can help empower marginalized groups to advocate for their rights, increase access to resources, and form networks of mutual support. These groups can serve as a platform for collective action and addressing food insecurity at the local level.
- **Community food banks and cooperatives:** Support the establishment of local food banks and food cooperatives, especially in rural and peri-urban areas, to ensure that food is distributed equitably. These initiatives can serve as an additional source of food during times of crisis.

8. Address Gender-Specific Food Insecurity Issues

- **Gender-sensitive interventions:** Since women in certain occupations, like weaving and sweeping, are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, interventions should be gender-sensitive. This may involve providing additional support for female-headed households, addressing barriers to women's economic empowerment, and ensuring equal access to education and financial services.

9. Advocacy and Policy Reform

- **Advocate for the rights of informal workers:** Advocate for the recognition of informal sector workers within labor laws and policies, ensuring they have access to legal protection, healthcare, and social security benefits.
- **Policy reforms in food security:** Support policy reforms that promote food sovereignty, ensuring that local, small-scale producers have access to markets and can compete with larger, industrial food producers.

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