

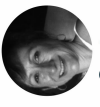


# # BuildBackBetter IUCN Virtual Dialogues

## The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender



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Chair of CEESP.

Mexico, USA, Bangladesh and Pakistan.



"We all know in any kind of disaster, women and children become 14 times more vulnerable and COVID has clearly shown how the pandemic has disproportionately impacted different gender, socio-economic and age groups."  
**Mahtuza Akter**



**Mahtuza Akter Mala**  
Programme Coordinator, Gender Justice & Social Inclusion Program, Oxfam Bangladesh.



From Bangladesh **in the last 9 months, around 975 incidents of rape** have been reported in Bangladesh with more than 200 of these reports being categorized as gang rape incidents, (Mahtuza Akter Mala, National NGO in Bangladesh).

According to research conducted by Center for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh's national poverty rate rose to **35 per cent in 2020 from 24.3 per cent in 2016** due to the adverse impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.



### Recommendations to IUCN

- ▶ **PREPARE, IDENTIFY and FACILITATE** information-sharing.
- ▶ Respond and document using a people-centered, and **SURVIVOR-CENTERED, APPROACH.**
- ▶ **COORDINATE** with women's, gender and GBV coordination bodies and agencies to address and document GBV in environmental contexts and programming.
- ▶ **ENGAGE men** as partners, recognize men and boys also suffer GBV, and adopt male engagement strategies to dismantle traditional gender roles.
- ▶ Increase understanding of linkages between gender and COVID-19.
- ▶ **REACH OUT** to new audiences.

"How do we take this inherent capacity for connectivity and create a new level of networking and empowerment? We are a global campus of people who have extraordinary capacity for research and scholarship at CEESP."  
**Javed Jabbar**

**Javed Jabbar**,  
Senator (Retired), Founding President Baanh Belt, Former IUCN Global Vice President, Pakistan.

**Enamul Mazid Khan Siddique**  
Head of Climate Justice & Natural Resource Rights, Oxfam Bangladesh.



### Call to action

- Learn about GBV and gender norms as part of project design
- Basic GBV training for all project staff
- Create or find a referral list
- Engage men and girls within the community
- Include the tracking of incidents or norms within the M&E plan

This dialogue focuses on the global situation, exploring prior assumptions of the pandemic and its impact on gender: issues of inequality, violence, access to education, health care, livelihoods, and financial independence will be explored.

In addition to being a health emergency, COVID-19 has led to a major global economic downturn, with potentially strong adverse impacts on the livelihoods of vulnerable groups.

### Challenges

- ▶ **Impact at home:** Women and girls are disproportionately responsible for household duties. Home quarantines, restricted access to market and food shortages can increase household tensions and result in domestic violence.
- ▶ **Impact on livelihoods increasing violence:** Greater workload increase tensions and risk for violence.
- ▶ Delayed access to contraceptive pills as well as the food crisis, women are witnessing less food intake leading to an increase in malnutrition in women and children.

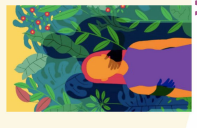
Before the pandemic began, challenges existed in the access of the above areas. COVID has accelerated and **increased the gap of these services for marginalized groups.**

In Bangladesh the infection rate for COVID-19 has remained higher for men, however **women continue to be more vulnerable comparatively** due to traditional gender roles.

Referral system for reporting GBV incidents and health care access for women in Bangladesh have been **unavailable or have been greatly reduced in capacity due to the pandemic.**

### Lessons Learned

- ▶ Have seen GBV guidelines (attached) been helpful to Conservation International team members in addressing difficult situations they have found themselves in while on the field.
- ▶ Increased household responsibilities to collect and manage natural resources can potentially increase exposure to COVID-19, which in turn can further increase stigmatization, isolation and GBV.
- ▶ Nationwide lockdowns have led to mass exodus of migrant workers from cities to their villages, where both the possibility of transmission and domestic violence can increase.
- ▶ As seen in droughts, increased resource insecurity due to the pandemic may lead to a rise in child marriage, to gain bride wealth or lessen food needs within a family.



### Want to know more?

IUCN: GBV and Environment Linkages: The violence of inequality.  
Conservation International Gender Based Violence: Recognizing and responding to GBV in community conservation (attached).

"At IUCN, we are creating a new platform called the GBV-ENV center where we are focusing our attention to tackle, learn, act and create change in this area."  
**Itza Castaneda**

"The GBV guidelines put together by Conservation International prepare non-gender experts on what to do when someone comes to you with a specific situation; it starts to get at the question of where does the role of the CI field-based practitioner begin and end."  
**Kame Westernmen**

"According to research from Oxfam, as many as 12,000 people could die per day by the end of the year as a result of hunger linked to COVID-19, potentially more than could die from the disease."  
**Enam Khan**

