

Follow-up with Rana Plaza Survivors: A Quick Assessment in 2022

Introduction

ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) has worked closely with the survivors and families of the deceased since 2013. AAB provided emergency support during the rescue and developed a comprehensive database of approximately 1400 survivors in 2013. Since 2013 AAB has been using the database to periodically collect information to track the progress of the survivors and families of deceased. Additionally, AAB worked with survivors on issues of rehabilitation and re-integration. The preliminary findings from a follow-up on the survivors are presented in this report.

Objective

To understand the current condition of Rana Plaza survivors. For understanding the rehabilitation and reintegration of Rana Plaza survivors, we specifically sought information considering the global pandemic on

- Survivors' physical and psychosocial well-being and
- Survivors' overall economic condition
- How the pandemic is impacting survivors' regular life.

Scope and limitations

The findings of the follow-up survey are a reflection of the progress of the socio-economic re-integration of the individuals in the database of survivors which was first prepared during a comprehensive survey conducted six months after the Rana Plaza collapse. This panel survey does not include the information of the families of the deceased and missing claimed. The percentage referred in the present survey is that of the respondents reached and not of the total number of the survivors. The survey focuses on the reintegration scenario, limited to social, economic and physical aspects of the affected people. It is an effort to track the development of these people, analytically comparing with the findings of the previous panel surveys. The database was used to follow up with 200 survivors over phone. The findings are based on the perception and acknowledgement of respondents. The percentage referred is that of the survivors reached and not of the total number of survivors.

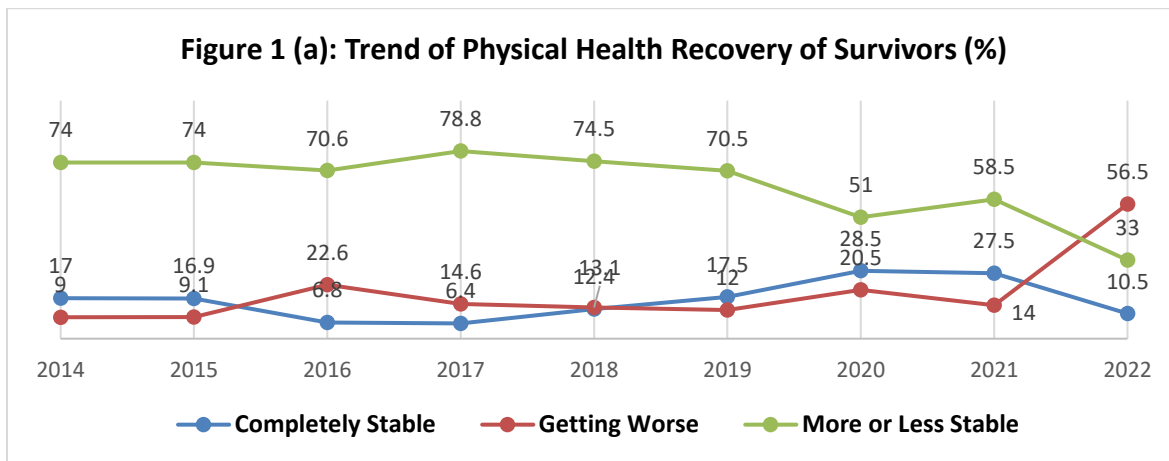
Methodology

The findings of the survey based on primary data collected from the respondents in the follow-up survey. In this present survey, all the respondents were interviewed over phone. The phone interviews were conducted during March 25 to April 06, 2022. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the survivors. On accumulation of information, the recent data

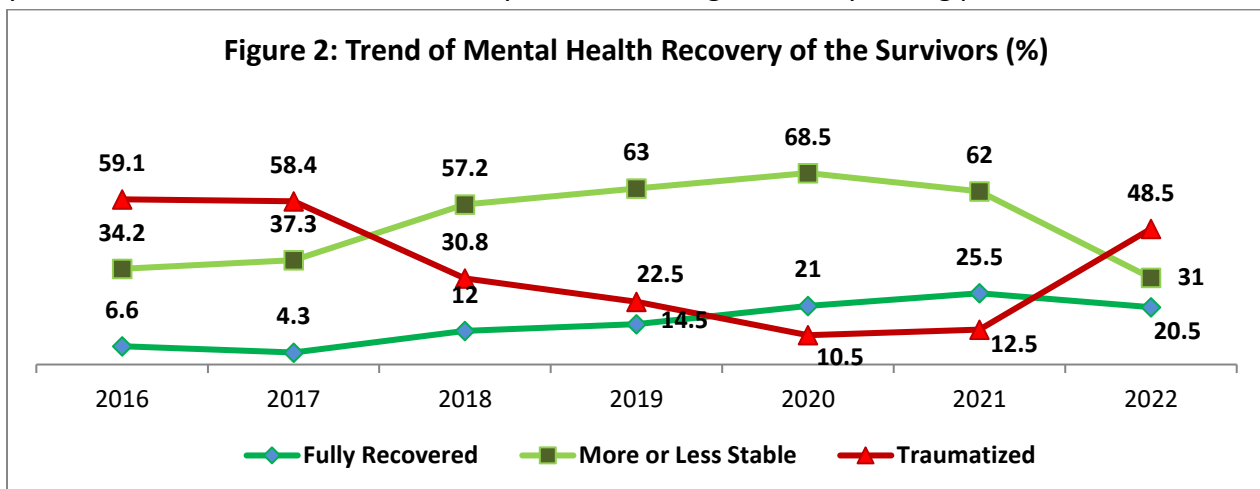
entry helped to update the broad database enabling the study team to prepare an analysis, comparing with previous databases.

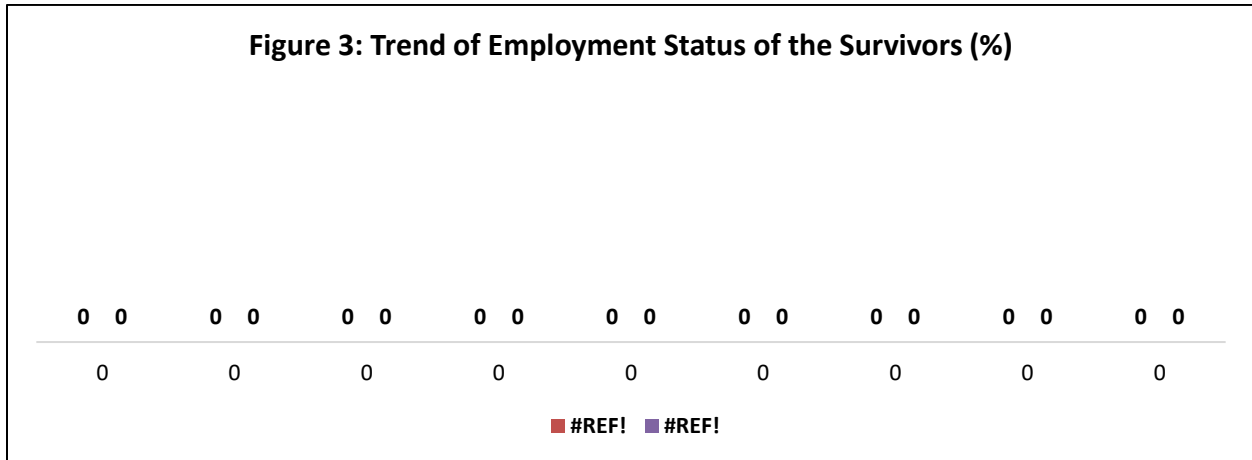
Preliminary Findings

From the survey, we found that 56.5 percent participants (figure 1) said their condition is getting worse which was only 14 percent in previous year. 33 percent are more or less stable which was 58.5 percent in last year, and 10.5 percent are completely stable which was 27.5 percent last year. Out Of the 56.5 percent who reported that their condition is getting worse in the current survey listed waist pain, head pain, pain in hand and leg, back pain as some of the major problems. The trend of previous surveys show that physical health status of the survivors was slowly improving but due to COVID their sufferings getting worse.

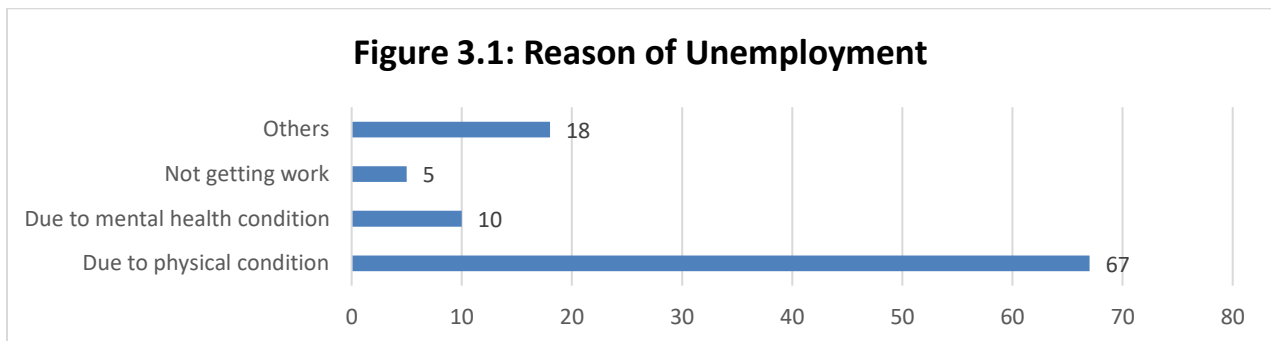


In terms of psychosocial health, 48.5 percent (figure 2) are still in trauma in comparison to 12.5 percent survivors last year. Currently 31 percent reported that they are more or less stable which was 62 percent last year and 20.5 percent have recovered fully compared to 25.5 percent last year. Survivors’ mental health recovery is deteriorating drastically during pandemic time.

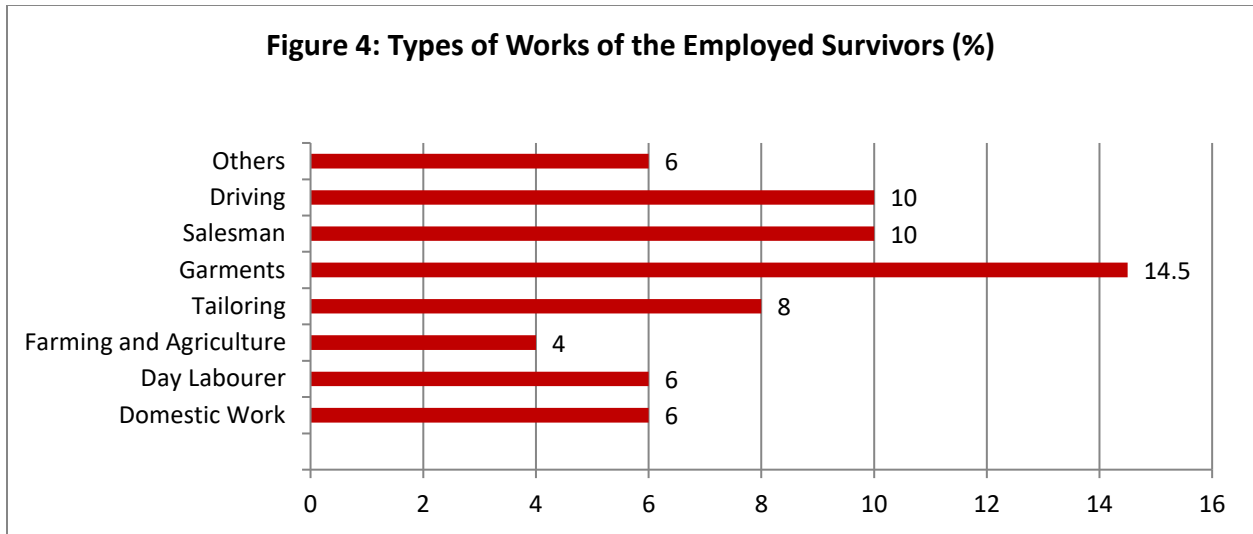




From the follow-up (figure 3) we found that 53 percent of the survivors are unemployed or have no income which was 57 percent in last year and 47 percent survivors are engaged in various types of wage and self-employment in comparison to 43 percent last year. From previous surveys we have found that the nature of unemployment is temporary. They tend to change work frequently as their physical conditions do not allow them to work for long-periods at a time.

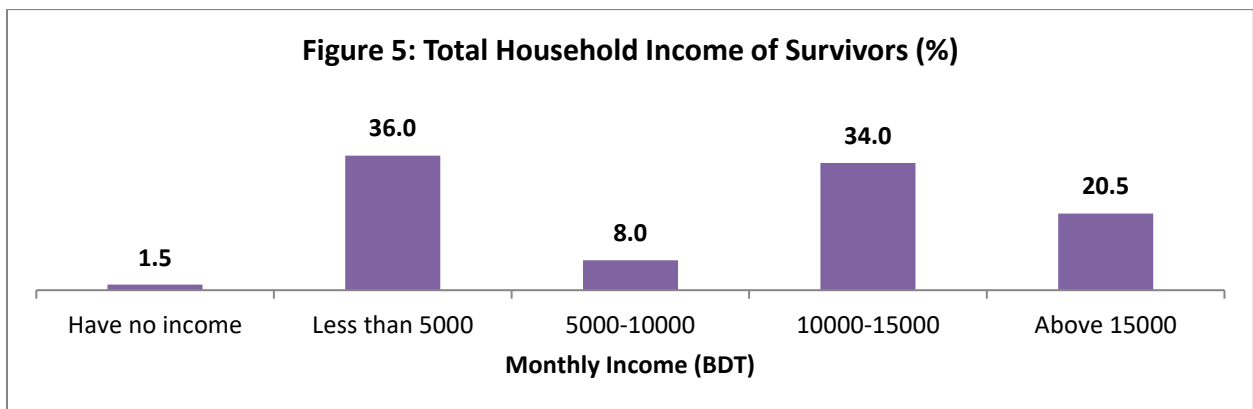


In figure 3.1 shows that 67 percent of survivors are unemployed due to bad physical condition and 10 percent have mental trauma.

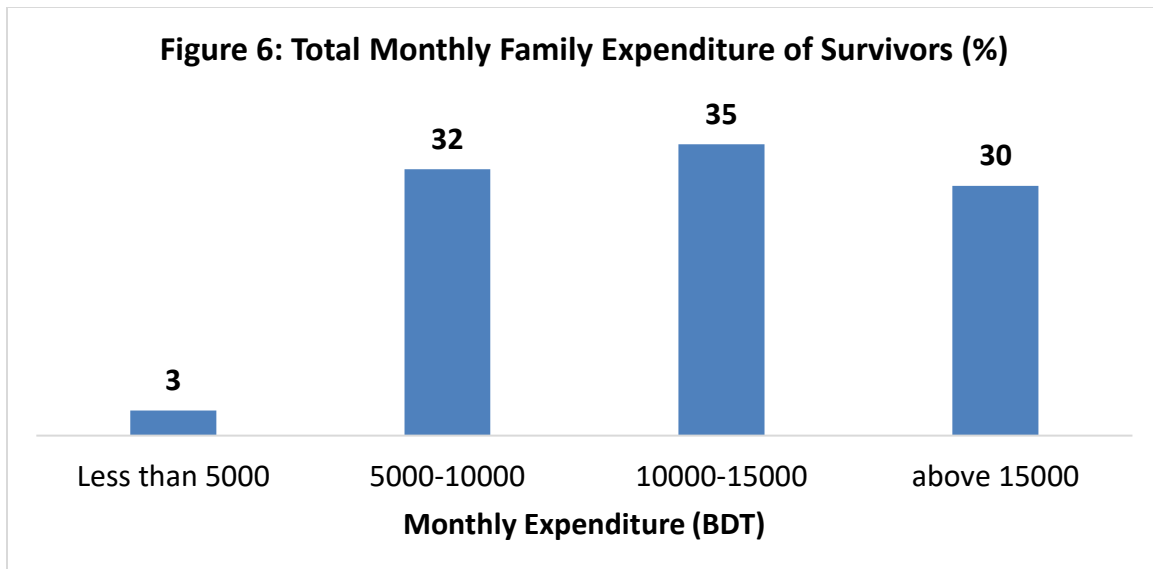


Within the survivors who are currently employed, they are engaged in different types of activities (figure 4). 14.5 percent survivors have returned to garments with another 8 percent involved in tailoring. From this survey we can see that majority of the respondents have gone back to garments which is similar to what we have seen in previous survey.

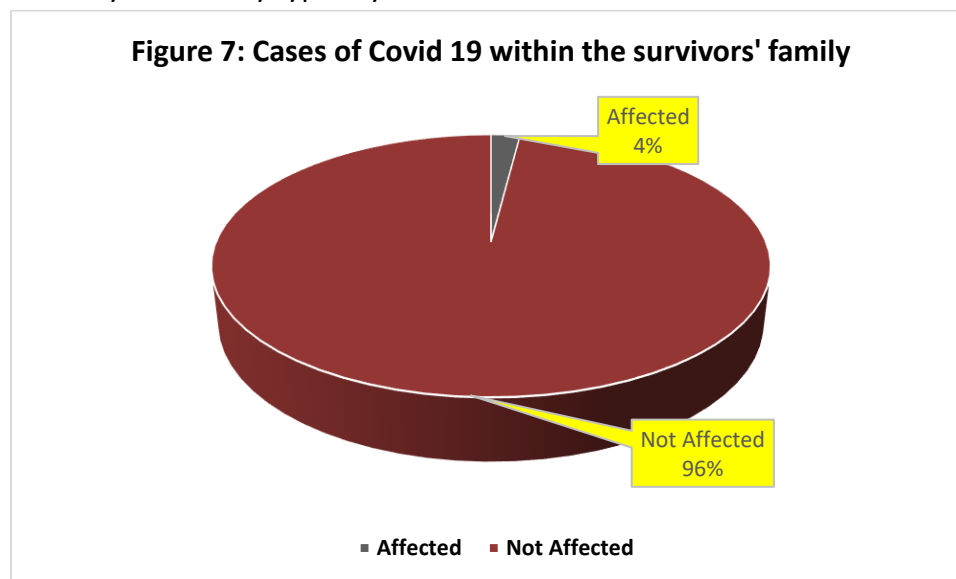
In figure 5, most of the survivors (36 percent) said their household income is less than 5,000 BDT. 34 percent have a household income between 10,000 BDT- 15,000 BDT. Previous follow up survey had similar total household income pattern. Most of the survivors (70.5 percent) have one other earning member in the family.



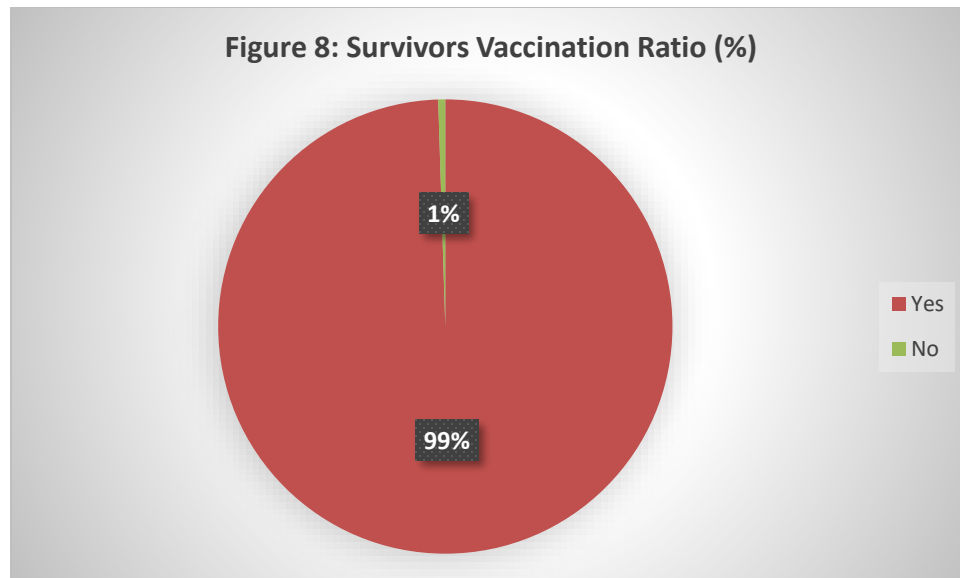
35 percent of survivors (figure 6) reported that their expenditure is over 10,000 BDT and 30 percent have above 15000 BDT with major costs incurred for food, followed by house-rent, children’s education, and treatment. It needs to be noted that, income of most of the employed survivors have drastically decreased due the impacts of the pandemic. They took loan to cover their monthly expenditure and childcare purpose.



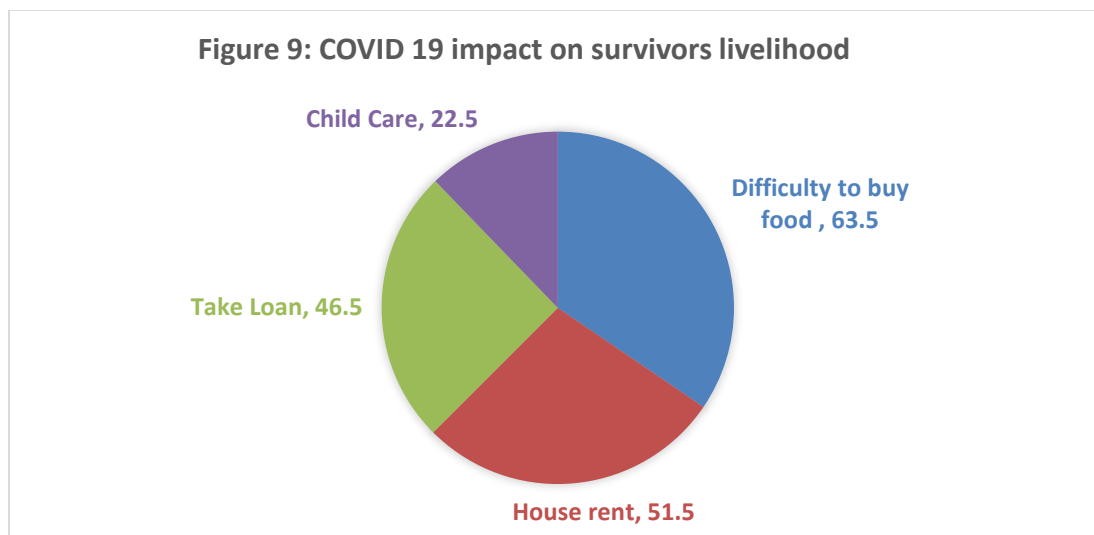
Only 4% (figure 7) of 200 survivors were found to be infected with Covid 19. This result is surprising because they stated that they do not test for COVID if they have minor symptoms such as a fever or a body ache. They typically take medication and recover.



In terms of the Covid vaccination, we found 99.5 percent took vaccine, whereas only 1 survivor did not take due to pregnancy.

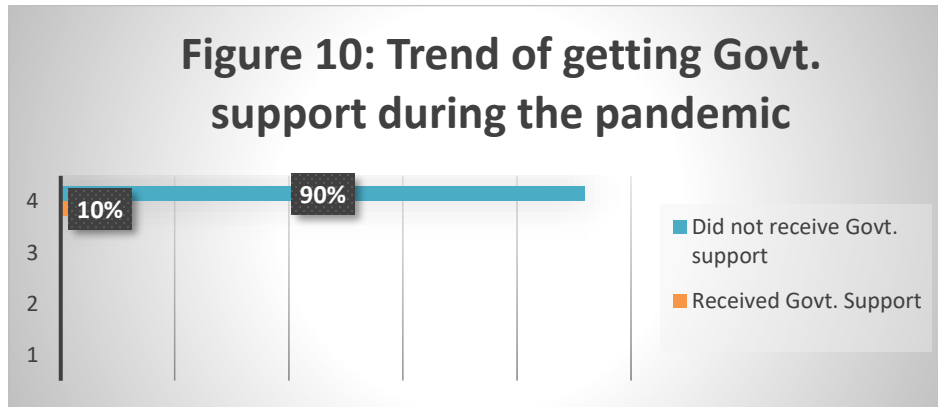


In the follow up survey, they said they suffered a lot during COVID 19 lockdown by arranging food and house rent for their family. 63.5 percent of survivors (figure 9) said they had difficulty to buy food for their family in everyday during COVID 19 pandemic because they did not have the money to buy food. 51.5 percent said they couldn't pay their rent, and 22.5 percent said they couldn't afford childcare. It's unfortunate that 46.5 percent of survivors had to take out a loan to manage their family's food and other belongings during COVID 19 pandemic.



From our follow-up we found that 90% (figure 10) survivors did not get any support from the Government during the pandemic. Rest of them get some supports (e.g. foods and health and

hygiene materials) from several local level groups and individuals. They expect meaningful supports from the Government to be reintegrated and mitigate their economic challenges. Most of them have expectations to get job opportunities, easy loans to start business and continuous treatment facilities at the public hospitals and rehabilitation centers.



The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for these RMG workers, more specifically the RANA Plaza Survivors' are dire and include uncertainty lack of money for essentials such as food, health risks and the development of mental health conditions due to the impact of the loss of employment.