

**Study Type**

Descriptive / Surveillance

**Article Link**<https://www.gage.odi.org/adolescent-experiences-of-covid-19/>**Research Implemented by IPA**

Yes

# Gender and Adolescence: The Impact of COVID-19 on Economic Aspirations and Outcomes of Bangladeshi Adolescents

## Researchers

Sarah Baird (George Washington University); Silvia Guglielmi (GAGE); Khadija Mitu (University of Chittagong); Sabina F. Rashid (BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health); Tauseef Salauddin (University of Manchester); Jennifer Seager (George Washington University); Maheen Sultan (BRAC Institute of Governance and Development)

## Abstract

IPA, George Washington University, and Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) researchers have been implementing a study with Bangladeshi adolescents since 2017 to understand both transitions to adulthood and ‘what works’ to improve their transitions to adulthood. COVID-19 may affect their education, skills acquisition, and job prospects by limiting access to education, disrupting household income, increasing stress and exposure to violence, and shifting household and care work onto them. Researchers administered a phone survey to 4,485 adolescents in May 2020, when Bangladesh was under a country-wide lockdown. Researchers initiated a second round of surveys with the same group between February 2021 and April 2021, successfully surveying 3,779 adolescents, when the economy opened up but schools were still closed. These surveys took place in three distinct settings: among adolescents living in three low income areas in and around Dhaka, among adolescents who were attending grades 7 and 8 in Chittagong and Sylhet divisions prior to the pandemic, and among Bangladeshi and Rohingya adolescents living near and inside refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar district.

The second round of surveys will help researchers and policy makers understand the dynamic effects of the pandemic, how adolescents respond, and how gender, household income, education, and economic aspirations affect their ability to adapt to crises. Researchers will especially focus on the older adolescents (15+) to measure their investment in skills for a

better school-to-work transition, and the nature of paid and unpaid work that they are engaged in. IPA and GAGE expect to share results in late July 2021. These quantitative surveys were supplemented by qualitative surveys. This study is part of a larger [GAGE-led initiative in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Jordan](#) to track the impact of COVID-19 on adolescents and their caregivers.

## Project Outcomes of Interest

There are three main outcomes of interest:

1. Work and Skilling: outcomes: jobs, income and control over money, skills acquisition, economic aspirations;
2. Education and learning: disruptions in education, ability to study/learn while schools are closed, concerns about COVID-19 affecting education in the long-term;
3. Burden of care work.

The study also measures disproportionate impacts by gender.

## Partners

[Gender, Adolescence, and Global Evidence \(GAGE\)](#), [George Washington University](#), [BRAC Institute of Governance and Development](#), [BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health](#)

## Impact Goals

- Improve women's health, safety, and economic empowerment

## Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

## Results Status

Results

## Results

While schools increased student support during the COVID 19 pandemic, the results revealed growing gender gaps. Female adolescents reported less support for their continued learning from schools and parents, less access to learning materials, more household and care responsibilities, and a sharper decline in higher education ambitions. Researchers also found evidence of disparities among urban and rural households. For example, adolescents in rural areas had less access to the media and other channels that supported distance learning. Read more details [here](#).

The results also revealed an increased involvement of out-of-school adolescents in paid work during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those from poor households. However, young people looking for jobs reported unavailability of jobs or being underqualified as major constraints in their search. Across contexts, adolescents exhibited very low involvement in vocational training or skill-building programs. Read more details [here](#).

These findings point to the need for targeted education policies to mitigate growing inequalities in learning outcomes and to support skills training programs to support young people's transition to paid work.

## **Link to Public Data**

<https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8985>

<https://www.gage.odi.org/research/data-archiving/>

## **Link to Questionnaire**

[Round 2 Phone Survey | Gender and Adolescence: The Impact of COVID-19 on Economic Aspirations and Outcomes of Bangladeshi Adolescents](#)