

CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THEIR INIMIZATION: A CASE OF SHER-E-BANGLA AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

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Executive Summary

The study was conducted to: i) determine the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic on the students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, ii) determine the extent of minimization of the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic by the university authority initiatives, and iii) determine the extent of self-security and safety measures of the students of the university against COVID-19 pandemic. Key Informants' Interviews (KII) were conducted with 20 Key Informants including Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Departmental Chairmen, Controller of Examination and Registrar of the university by using semi-structured interview schedule to identify the items of consequences of COVID-19 pandemic on the students of the university and the items of initiatives taken by the authorities to minimize the consequences. Data were gathered from 337 sample students by using a pre-tested structural interview schedule by face to face interview method during the period from February 2022 to April 2022 for general information, extent of consequences due to COVID-19 pandemic and minimization of the consequences by university authority initiatives. Examination related data were collected from the Office of the Controller of Examination and Academic section of the university. According to descending order of Standardized Consequence Index, "Academic loss due to session jam" ranked 1st followed by "disturbance in internet connection for online class and examination"; "frustration, tension and loneliness"; "financial crisis due to losing tuition activity"; "physical illness"; "social media addiction"; "detach from study"; and "delaying entry into job". "Academic loss due to session jam" was the main consequences and other consequences were the intermediate consequences interlinked with the main consequence. University authority took several initiatives to minimize the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic like "taking online classes and examinations for two to three sessions for each Level and Semester of Undergraduate and Post Graduate programs", "providing interest free loan to students to purchase smart phone for joining in online class and examinations", "provide students' list to the Ministry of Health, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh for smooth vaccination of the students", and "providing regular information to the students by COVID Controlling Committee of the university for maintaining self-security and safety measures against COVID-19 pandemic. By the initiatives of the university authority, minimization of academic losses of the students admitted in 2021 were 25.39% in all the undergraduate programs and range of minimizing losses of the students admitted in MS programs in January-June 2020 semesters in different departments was 12.87% to 56.35%. To reduced rest session jam for making full session jam free academic programs of the university recommendations were made as "possible earlier admission of the students in different academic programs", "strictly following the academic calendar for the programs", "evaluation of the answer script of the examinations of the students by the teachers within a possible shortest time", "tabulation and publication of examination results within a possible shortest time", "starting classes for next semester just immediate after examination of the previous semester", "properly supervising MS and PhD research activities by the Supervisors", "timely evaluation of theses/dissertation of MS and PhD research works", and "timely arrangement of MS and PhD defense and publication of results within a shortest time". University authority provided regular information to the students by COVID Controlling Committee of the University for maintaining self-security and safety measures against COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, self-security & safety measures of the students against COVID-19 pandemic were satisfactory as the range of Standardized Self-security & Safety Measures (SISSM) was 43.03% to 96.14%. Such type of information providing system should be adopted by the authority to inform the students of the university against any pandemic situation in future.

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