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Journalism Without Fear or Favour

Economy (/business/economy) THURSDAY, March 31, 2022

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Cash support can help poor in lean season Say experts



Staff Correspondent, Ctg

Tue Mar 29, 2022 12:00 AM Last update on: Tue Mar 29, 2022 01:16 AM



Hundreds of millions of people around the world, including Bangladesh, Nepal and different parts of Southeast Asia and Africa, suffer from seasonal poverty and acute

Cash transfer or temporary loans can be helpful for extremely insolvent families during the pre-harvest lean season, characterised by seasonal poverty and famine known as "monga", speakers told a discussion.

There has been improvements to the situation resembling "monga" but it still remains an important problem, they opined.

They were addressing a public lecture on "Innovation to address seasonal poverty" organised online by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak, a professor of economics at Yale University, delivered the lecture based on his research.

He said hundreds of millions of people around the world, including Bangladesh, Nepal and different parts of South East Asia and Africa, suffer from seasonal poverty and acute deprivation, often associated with a pre-harvest lean season.

Though the situation has improved in Bangladesh and seasonal deprivation has become less of a pressing issue, it still remains a problem to be reckoned with, he said.

As working male members from rural areas migrate to urban areas in search of better wages during the lean season, their families back home suffer badly due to cash constraints, he said.

Seasonal deprivation causes problems like missed meals, malnourished children, lower agricultural productivity and poverty traps due to high-interest borrowing, lower education and others, said Mobarak.

The migrant members usually fail to send money to their suffering families at the time of their need and mostly carry the earned

Mushfiq underscored the need for arrangements of migration subsidies for the family members in the affected villages so that they can use the money.

Referring to his study, Mushfiq said temporary migration loan increase daily food consumption in villages by 550 calories to 700 calories.

BIDS Director General Binayak Sen said migration subsidies work, at least for the group of people who were extremely poor, landless and deprived of other opportunities.



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Tue Mar 29, 2022 12:00 AM Last update on: Tue Mar 29, 2022 09:56 AM