

**Assessing the Effectiveness of Government Food Subsidies on Rice and Wheat in
Bangladesh: Economic Implications for Low-Income Households**

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MAGD

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) BRAC University
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

This study followed accepted ethical norms for academic research, with a focus on the values of informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants.

Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the nature and objective of the study. Participation in surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions was totally optional, and respondents were free to leave at any time without penalty. Consent was gained either verbally or in writing, depending on the circumstances and participant preferences.

This study did not use any fraud or coercion, and every effort was taken to ensure that participants were treated with decency and respect. The work follows BRAC University's ethical norms for human-subject research.

This work received no external funding, and there were no conflicts of interest that influenced the research method or results.

Abstract

Government food subsidy schemes, such as the Open Market Sale (OMS) initiative, are critical to Bangladesh's attempts to stabilize grain prices, improve food affordability, and safeguard low-income households from economic volatility. This extensive study looks into the efficiency of rice and wheat subsidy systems, with a special emphasis on their influence on food security, price stability, and endurance in disadvantaged groups. We used a mixed-methods approach, combining a stratified household survey, quantitative analysis (descriptive statistics, regression modeling, and difference-in-differences estimate), and qualitative interviews with policymakers, beneficiaries, and stakeholders.

Our data show that subsidized food grain distribution considerably reduces price volatility—particularly during seasonal price peaks—while increasing calorie intake and dietary stability in low-income families. Beneficiary families have a 10% higher monthly staple intake and a 15% lower rate of extremely low food security than control groups. OMS initiatives help to improve market access and stabilize prices during economic downturns, which contributes to urban food security.

However, both general subsidy programs and OMS schemes confront ongoing obstacles such as mistargeting, leakages, governance concerns, and logistical inefficiencies. Beneficiaries recognize the significance of subsidies and OMS activities during lean seasons, but they express worries about registration problems and unequal distribution. Drawing on worldwide best practices (such as India's Public Distribution System and Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program), the report suggests better targeting using digital technologies, the use of poverty maps, and transparent delivery methods.

To summarize, while Bangladesh's food subsidy and OMS programs are vital safety nets that protect low-income populations from food insecurity and price volatility, their long-term viability is dependent on fixing systemic implementation issues. This study makes evidence-based recommendations to improve and optimize existing programs for better equity and effect.

Keywords: Food Subsidy; Open Market Sale (OMS); Food Security; Price Stabilization; Low-Income Households; Economic Volatility; Policy Reform.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the inspirational employees of the Directorate General of Food who died during the COVID-19 epidemic. While the globe was seized by uncertainty and dread, they carried out their jobs with calm persistence, ensuring that food reached those in most need. Their dedication, commitment, and strong sense of duty will be remembered with appreciation and respect.

Acknowledgement

Sheikh Touhidul Haque, PhD. (BIGD, BRAC University) provided valuable help in developing the study design. Officials of DG Food of Sherpur, Sirajgonj and Pirojpur districts helped me to derive the field level data. I appreciate the diligent fieldwork of FPMU team of Ministry of Food for the survey enumerators and focus group organizers.

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List of Acronyms

OMS	Open Market Sale
FFP	Food Friendly Program
TCB	Trading Corporation of Bangladesh
PFDS	Public Food Distribution System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SSNP	Social Safety Net Program
PDS	Public Distribution System
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Program
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
HFIAS	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale
FIES	Food Insecurity Access Scale
FPMU	Food Planning and Monitoring Unit
DG FOOD	Directorate General of Food
DiD	Difference in Differences
WFP	World Food Program
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GOB	Government of Bangladesh

Glossary

Beneficiary

An individual or family who receives food subsidies or assistance via government-run food distribution or safety net programs, such as the Open Market Sale (OMS) system.

DG Food (Directorate General of Food)

The government authority/ directorate under Ministry of Food, Peoples Republic of Bangladesh in charge of food grain management, including rice and wheat procurement, storage, and distribution.

Food Security

The condition in which all people have constant access to enough safe, nutritious food to live a healthy and active life.

Food Subsidy

A financial system in which the government cuts the cost of basic food commodities for it's people, with a focus on low-income and vulnerable groups.

Low Income Group

A portion of society whose income is below the poverty level and who frequently rely on public assistance or subsidies for basic necessities such as food.

Open Market Sale (OMS)

The Bangladesh government runs a public food distribution program to stabilize prices and offer subsidized food grains (particularly rice and wheat) to those in need during times of high market prices or crises.

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Subsidized Price

A lower-than-market price for food commodities such as rice or wheat, made feasible by government involvement to improve affordability for low-income customers.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Food security is still a major challenge in Bangladesh, as a large proportion of the population relies on subsidized food grain programs to achieve their basic nutritional requirements. Article 15(a) of Bangladesh's Constitution requires the state to provide the basic requirements of life, including food and social security, as fundamental rights to all residents. In response to this constitutional obligation, the Government of Bangladesh has developed an extensive array of social safety net programs, which fall broadly into two categories: social empowerment (focused on human development and livelihoods) and social protection (primarily involving transfers and food assistance).

Food subsidy schemes aimed at basic commodities like rice and wheat are among the most important social protection mechanisms. These initiatives seek to stabilize market prices, increase affordability for low-income households, and safeguard vulnerable groups during times of food price volatility or economic crises. Over time, programs such as the Open Market Sale (OMS) program and the Food Friendly Program (FFP), conducted by Bangladesh's Ministry of Food and TCB to some extent, have become critical cornerstones of the country's food security system.

The OMS program, which was established in the late 1970s and relaunched in 2008, is a government mechanism for reducing food price increases, particularly during lean seasons and crises. It distributes subsidized rice and wheat to low-income households via approved dealers and mobile trucks. Over 2.5 million metric tons of food grains were supplied under OMS during fiscal years 2019/20 to 2022/23, representing for roughly 22% of total food distributed under the Public Food Distribution System (PFDS) (FPMU, 2023-24). Recent expansions have increased the extent of OMS activities, with the FY2025-26 budget aiming to provide subsidized rice to 5.5 million people over six months. Furthermore, OMS has provided benefits to over ten million households through TCB Family Cards, demonstrating its rising importance in Bangladesh's social safety net.

Despite these large-scale initiatives, worries continue. Reports and reviews commonly emphasize implementation inefficiencies, including as leaks, mistargeting, logistical delays, and inadequate monitoring. These limitations reduce the effectiveness of subsidies and raise concerns about their long-term viability. While government allocations for food security and job creation are significant—approximately 13% of the national budget and 0.34% of GDP in FY2023-24—economic pressures such as high food inflation (above 9% since 2023) and rising poverty (estimated at 22.9% in 2025) necessitate a more rigorous examination of whether these subsidies are achieving their intended goals.

Given Bangladesh's reliance on rice and wheat for caloric intake (more than 65%) and the susceptibility of many districts—such as Sirajganj, Sherpur, and Pirojpur—where poverty rates remain high (more than 30% in certain situations), assessing the genuine efficiency of OMS is both urgent and necessary. As a result, the purpose of this study is to empirically evaluate the effectiveness and effects of OMS and other food subsidy schemes in terms of enhancing family food security and pricing stability.

Table-1: Food Grains Distributed in OMS Program from FY2019-20 to 2022-23

District	Amount of Rice and Wheat (in MT)
Sherpur	13,726.08
Sirajgonj	27,624.24
Pirojpur	16,300.49
Total	57,650.80

1.2 Problem Statement

It is vital to scientifically examine Bangladesh's staple-food subsidies. Do they genuinely stabilize rice and wheat prices for consumers? How much benefit do low-income households receive in terms of food security and poverty reduction? Are resources adequately targeted to those in greatest need, or do leakages reduce program impact? Addressing these challenges is crucial, as food inflation in Bangladesh has surpassed 9% since 2023 ([thedailystar.net](https://www.thedailystar.net)) and poverty rates are on the rise (national poverty forecast at 22.9% in 2025). Understanding the actual consequences of present subsidy programs can help determine if they should be altered.

1.3 Research Objectives

Building on these deficiencies, this study has four major objectives:

Price stabilization: Assess the efficiency of government rice and wheat subsidies in maintaining market prices (both short-term volatility and long-term trends).

Household impact: Estimate the economic impact of these subsidies on low-income households' consumption and income.

Poverty and food security: Determine if subsidy programs significantly reduce poverty and enhance food security indicators in the target population.

Inefficiencies: Identify implementation flaws (leaks, inclusion mistakes) and suggest changes.

1.4 Research Questions

a) What impact does the food subsidy program of the government have on rice and wheat prices and availability in Bangladesh?

b) What are the economic benefits and drawbacks of food subsidies for low-income households?

c) Do the existing subsidy schemes properly reach the poorest households?

d) Do fluctuations in the market and government intervention influence the income and food security of low-income people?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Food insecurity in Bangladesh is influenced by a variety of structural factors, including fast population expansion, climate change, repeated natural catastrophes, and economic shocks such as COVID-19 and global commodity price increases. While Bangladesh has achieved tremendous strides in food production and poverty reduction, fair access to food remains a significant challenge. Programs like OMS & FFP are intended to provide as a buffer against these shocks, ensuring that the poorest people have access to basic meals during times of need.

This study will add to the policy discussion by offering a data-driven assessment of OMS and other food subsidy programs. The study will help efforts to make Bangladesh's food security system more robust, efficient, and egalitarian, in line with the constitutional obligation to safeguard all citizens' basic rights.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Social safety net programs (SSNPs), particularly food subsidies, are widely recognized as critical tools in alleviating poverty, reducing food insecurity, and protecting vulnerable populations from economic and environmental shocks. Globally, governments have adopted various food-based social protection mechanisms to enhance access to basic nutrition and stabilize household consumption, especially among the poor.

2.1 Global Perspectives on Food Subsidies

Food subsidies and public food distribution systems are a common strategy across the developing world. India's Public Distribution System (PDS), for instance, reaches over 800 million beneficiaries with subsidized rice and wheat, with evidence suggesting improved dietary outcomes and reduced spending on unhealthy foods. A randomized trial found that recipients of subsidized grains spent 31% less on soft drinks and 16% less on snacks, indicating a dietary shift toward home-cooked meals without compromising nutrition (Ideas for India, n.d.). However, the fiscal cost is significant—over US\$16 billion in 2021–22—excluding environmental impacts from high-yield grain production (<https://ideasforindia.in>).

Similarly, Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) reaches approximately 8 million people through a combination of food and cash transfers. PSNP has helped smooth consumption during drought cycles but has recently faced challenges such as funding shortfalls, which forced a reduction in assistance from six to four months (The New Humanitarian, 2024). These examples underscore both the potential and vulnerability of such programs: when well-funded and targeted, they improve household welfare, but budget constraints and poor implementation can limit effectiveness.

Subsidies offer key economic trade-offs. They enhance purchasing power for net consumers (typically the poor) by lowering food prices but may simultaneously distort markets and create fiscal strain (World Bank, 2020). For net producers, such as small farmers, subsidies can reduce market prices and disincentivize production unless balanced through import dependency, as in Bangladesh.

2.2 Bangladesh's Food-Based Safety Net Programs

Bangladesh has a long tradition of food-based social protection programs, including the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Food for Work (FFW), Food Friendly Program (FFP), and the Open Market Sale (OMS). Initially universal, the focus has shifted to more targeted assistance over time. Despite broader coverage, persistent inefficiencies are evident. Ravallion et al. (1999) noted that only about 70% of targeted grain reached intended beneficiaries under the VGF/VGD programs, with a portion being sold off by recipients (ResearchGate, 1999).

An IFPRI evaluation of the Palli Rationing Program also documented irregularities, while a 2022 UN report highlighted that 22% of social assistance benefits in Bangladesh went to the richest 20% of households—an indication of high inclusion errors (UNB, 2022). In the same year, only half of poor households received any form of social protection, up from 23.7% in 2010 (UNB, 2022).

The OMS program, launched as a price stabilization initiative, has proven vital in mitigating food inflation and protecting purchasing power. During lean periods, subsidized OMS rice was priced around Tk 30/kg while market rates exceeded Tk 50/kg, offering a 40% price buffer for poor consumers. Although the OMS program distributes a relatively small portion of total food supply (about 2%), its impact on price stabilization and consumption smoothing is significant (World Bank, 2020).

However, few empirical studies in Bangladesh directly quantify the household-level benefits of such programs. A study analyzing data from 2007–2009 found that the global food price crisis significantly worsened food insecurity, though subsequent subsidies and market reforms helped mitigate long-term welfare losses (ResearchGate, 2009).

2.3 Efficiency, Targeting, and Policy Design

One of the most persistent challenges in food-based safety nets is ineffective targeting. Conning and Kevane (2000) argue that while safety nets are theoretically powerful, administrative shortcomings in many developing countries have undermined their ability to effectively reach the poor. Subbarto (2002) adds that programs must differentiate between ultra-poor sub-groups and other at-risk groups to optimize targeting outcomes.

In Bangladesh, multiple programs often target the same beneficiaries, leading to overlap, redundancy, and administrative waste. Ahmed (2007) suggests the need for a universal, cohesive targeting mechanism to streamline operations and reduce costs. Studies also stress the importance of gender-sensitive targeting, agricultural integration, and decentralized monitoring (Rai et al., 2013).

Meanwhile, Rogers and Coates (2002) advocate for viewing different food transfer modalities—e.g., food-for-work, direct grain distribution, cash transfers—as complementary rather than competing, each serving distinct demographic and geographic needs. Neetu George and Fiona McKay (2019) point out that India’s PDS could significantly reduce hunger and childhood malnutrition if operational inefficiencies and environmental issues are adequately addressed.

Recent discussions on Bangladesh’s social protection system emphasize the need for alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the domains of health, education, and environmental sustainability. Mallik (2017) argues that achieving inclusive and sustainable growth requires a robust and dynamic safety net system capable of adapting to evolving socio-economic conditions.

2.4 Comparative Lessons and Research Gaps

International experiences, particularly from India and Ethiopia, offer important lessons for Bangladesh. India's reforms—including digital ID-based targeting through Aadhaar and the National Food Security Act—have enhanced efficiency, albeit with concerns about reduced dietary diversity and fiscal sustainability. Ethiopia's labor-for-food model under PSNP shows promise but is vulnerable to fiscal instability.

Bangladesh mirrors global patterns: while food subsidies and public food distribution help maintain access during crises, systemic inefficiencies—such as outdated beneficiary lists, lack of digital verification, and rural-urban imbalances—dilute their potential (UNB, 2022; World Bank, 2020). Enhancing transparency and targeting, backed by poverty mapping and digitized registration, can significantly boost impact.

Despite substantial budgetary commitments, empirical studies on the OMS program's effectiveness remain sparse. This literature review highlights the critical need for fresh, data-driven evaluation of how food subsidies in Bangladesh affect price stability, household consumption, and poverty alleviation—particularly in high-poverty districts.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study applies a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative household surveys, qualitative interviews, and focus group discussions. This dual technique enables rigorous statistical examination as well as deeper contextual insights into the effects of food subsidies, particularly those provided under the Open Market Sale (OMS) program in specific high-poverty districts of Bangladesh.

Primary data was derived from recent survey in Sirajganj, Sherpur, and Pirojpur districts with the help of DG Food officials. Moreover, a team of Ministry of Food researchers performed the research in three districts: Sirajganj, Sherpur, and Pirojpur, which were chosen for their high poverty prevalence and strong OMS program participation. The research ran from July 2023 to June 2024 and included survey development, pretesting, gathering and analyzing data, and validation workshops.

3.2 Quantitative Methodology

3.2.1 Sampling Design and Sample Size

A stratified multistage cluster sampling approach was used to achieve representativeness across geographic and socioeconomic strata. Initially, distribution zones within the OMS program (district headquarters and Pourashavas) were chosen. Respondents were divided into two groups:

- i) OMS beneficiaries (who get subsidized rice or atta) and non-beneficiaries (who do not receive subsidies but live in the same community).
- ii) OMS Dealers, Rice Traders, and Other Stakeholders (government officials, program operators).

The overall sample size was 1,107 respondents, divided as follows:

Table-02

District	Beneficiaries	Non-Beneficiaries	OMS Dealers	Rice Traders	Total
Sherpur	150	150	19	26	335
Sirajganj	200	200	19	30	439
Pirojpur	150	150	18	25	333
Total	500	500	56	81	1,107

Sample size determination followed the formula for population proportion with 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and a standard deviation of 0.5.

3.2.2 Data Collection Tools and Variables

An organized questionnaire was utilized to collect household-level data, including:

- Demographics like age, household size, occupation, and education.
- Income and assets include monthly income, land ownership, livestock, and durable items.
- Food Consumption: Includes 30-day food spend by item, estimated calorie intake from food composition tables, and HFIAS/FIES indicators to assess food security status.
- Metrics for OMS participation include access, frequency, quantity, and pricing.
- Coping strategies include asset sales, borrowing, and dietary alterations during shocks.
- Ensuring program awareness and satisfaction.

Secondary data was gathered from official OMS records, FPMU reports, and DG Food databases to help triangulate coverage, distribution, and pricing patterns.

3.2.3 Analytical Framework

Statistical methods were used for quantitative analysis, which included descriptive statistics to compare average consumption, expenditures, and food security indicators between groups.

- Utilizing mean difference technique (t-test), a sub-sample was re-surveyed during the lean season (March) and post-harvest (August). Households that got OMS subsidies in March were compared to those who did not, to determine whether observed differences between group averages (means) are statistically significant or simply due to chance.

3.3 Qualitative Methodology

To complement survey findings, in-depth qualitative data were gathered via:

- **20 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** Conducted with government officials, OMS dealers, food policy experts, and NGO representatives.
- **8 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** in each district (total 24), involving:
 - **Group 1:** OMS Dealers,
 - **Group 2:** Govt. Officials, Service Providers and Local Representatives (e.g., chairmen, millers),
 - **Group 3:** OMS Beneficiaries,
 - **Group 4:** OMS Non-Beneficiaries.

Table-03

District	Group-1	Group-2	Group-3	Group-4	Total Participants
Sherpur	9	20	15	15	59
Sirajganj	10	20	15	15	60
Pirojpur	10	20	15	15	60
Total	39	60	45	45	179

The qualitative component examined:

- Perceptions of the OMS program's effectiveness and fairness, as well as operational difficulties such as delays and corruption.
- Community coping mechanisms for food price increases.
- Policy recommendations.
- Thematic analysis was utilized to code and analyze recurring concepts, which were then triangulated against quantitative data for validation.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the interviews, all participants provided informed verbal consent. Anonymity and confidentiality were upheld throughout the data gathering and analysis. Enumerators were educated in ethical guidelines, and interviews were done respectfully, particularly during FGDs, to minimize stigma or intervention.

This study followed national research conduct criteria. To reduce response bias, respondents were informed that the study was strictly academic and had no bearing on subsidy eligibility.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

- **Time and Resource Constraints:** The study's focus on three districts limits its capacity to generalize to national trends due to time and budget constraints. A nationwide research would need greater resources.
- **Recall Bias:** Respondents sometimes failed to recall precise consumption or income statistics, particularly for monthly or weekly recall questions.
- **Language Barriers:** Volunteers were enlisted to help collect data despite language barriers.

- **Secondary Data Gaps:** Some updated thana/upazila level statistics were unavailable, resulting in dependence on national-level or outdated information.
- **Program Overlapping:** The study focused on OMS, however other programs such as FFP or TCB may possibly have an impact on outcomes but were not independently assessed.

This mixed-methods approach allowed for a thorough knowledge of the OMS program's scope, efficacy, and opportunities for development. The combination of rigorous quantitative evaluation and rich qualitative insights positions this study to inform more equitable and successful food subsidy policy in Bangladesh.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

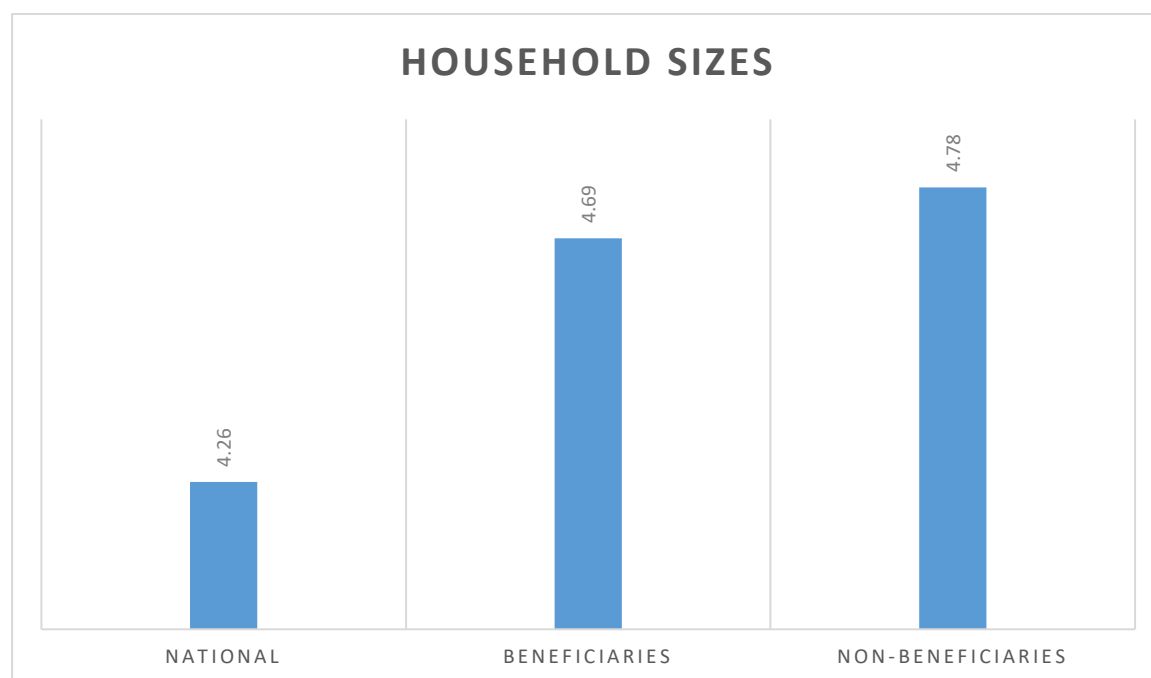
This chapter evaluates the socio-economic and food security implications of the government's food subsidy program, specifically the Open Market Sale (OMS) of rice and wheat, for low-income households in three districts: Sirajganj, Sherpur, and Pirojpur. It does this by integrating results from surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and official statistics.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

4.1.1 Household Size

The average household size in the selected three districts was 4.69 for OMS recipients and 4.78 for non-beneficiaries, both higher than the national average of 4.26 (BBS, 2022). This implies a trend of bigger families among low-income groups, which might be attributable to inadequate access to family planning services or a lack of knowledge (Figure 1).

Figure -1: Average Household Size of Respondents



Source: Field Survey and BBS (2022)

4.2 Changes in Living Standards and Access to Social Services

4.2.1 Housing Condition

Housing is a significant predictor of well-being. The statistics indicate that 64% of OMS recipients and 63% of non-beneficiaries live in kaccha households. However, non-beneficiaries live in semi-pucca houses at a slightly greater rate (31%) than beneficiaries (25%), while both

groups have an equal number (3%) of pucca dwellings (Table-4). Surprisingly, just 5 beneficiaries and 4 non-beneficiaries were identified homeless out of 500 of each category.

Table -4: Type of House Structure among Respondents

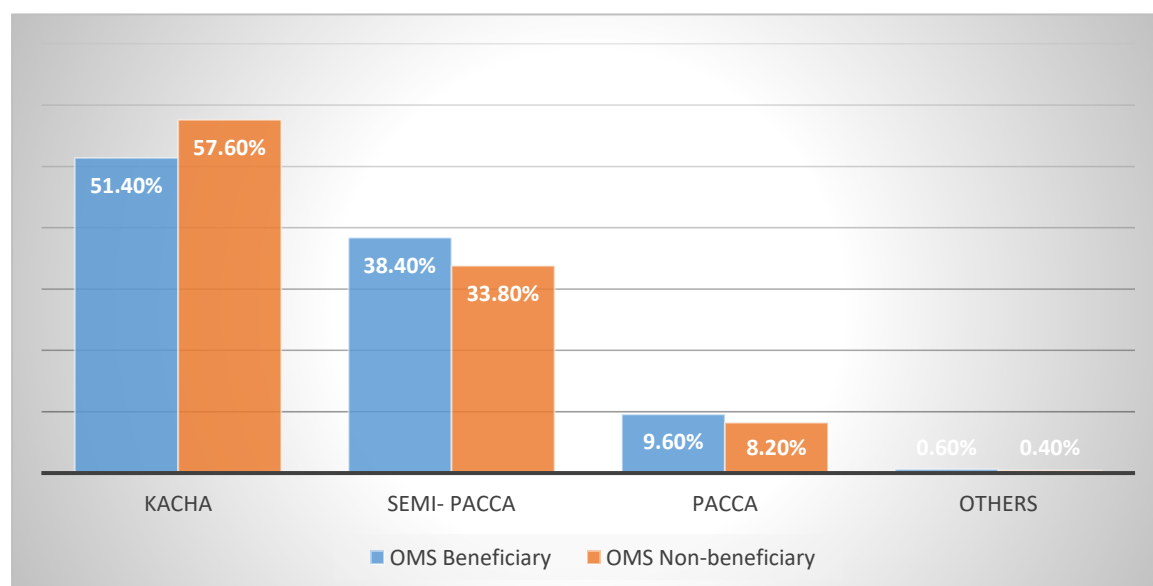
Status	Jhupri	Kaccha	Semi-pucca	Pucca	Others
OMS Beneficiaries	6%	64%	25%	3%	1%
Non-beneficiaries	3%	63%	31%	3%	1%

Source: Field Survey

4.2.2 Sanitation and Latrine Use

Beneficiaries reported higher rates of sanitation improvement than non-beneficiaries. 51.4% of beneficiaries utilized kacha latrines, 38.4% semi-pucca, and 9.6% pucca latrines. Non-beneficiaries fared significantly worse: 57.6% utilized kacha, 33.8% semi-pucca, and 8.2% pucca latrines (Figure 2). The minor difference shows that OMS advantages may allow for sanitation investment.

Figure- 2: Comparative Use of Sanitary Latrines



Source: Field Survey

4.3 Economic Characteristics and Consumption Patterns

4.3.1 Household Income

The average monthly income for OMS recipients was BDT 10,355, compared to BDT 11,982 for non-beneficiaries (Figure -3). This demonstrates that OMS predominantly serve lower-income sectors that rely heavily on subsidized food programs.

Figure -3: Average Monthly Household Income

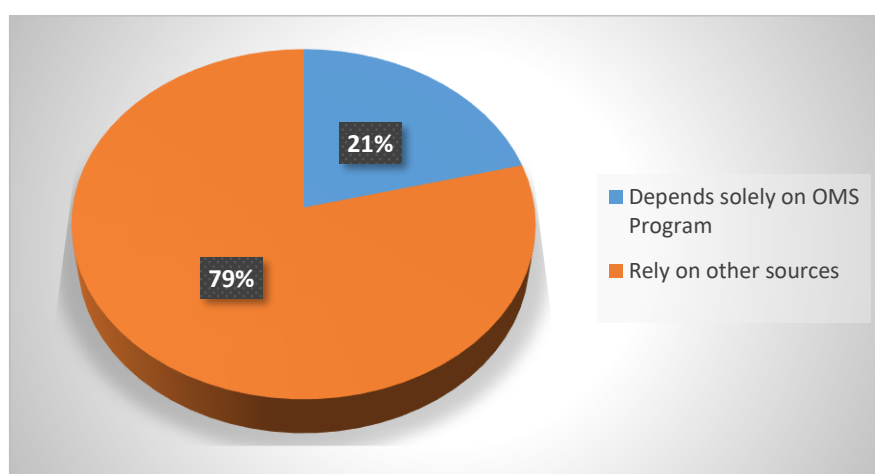


Source: Field Survey

4.3.2 Reliance on OMS and Other Food Sources

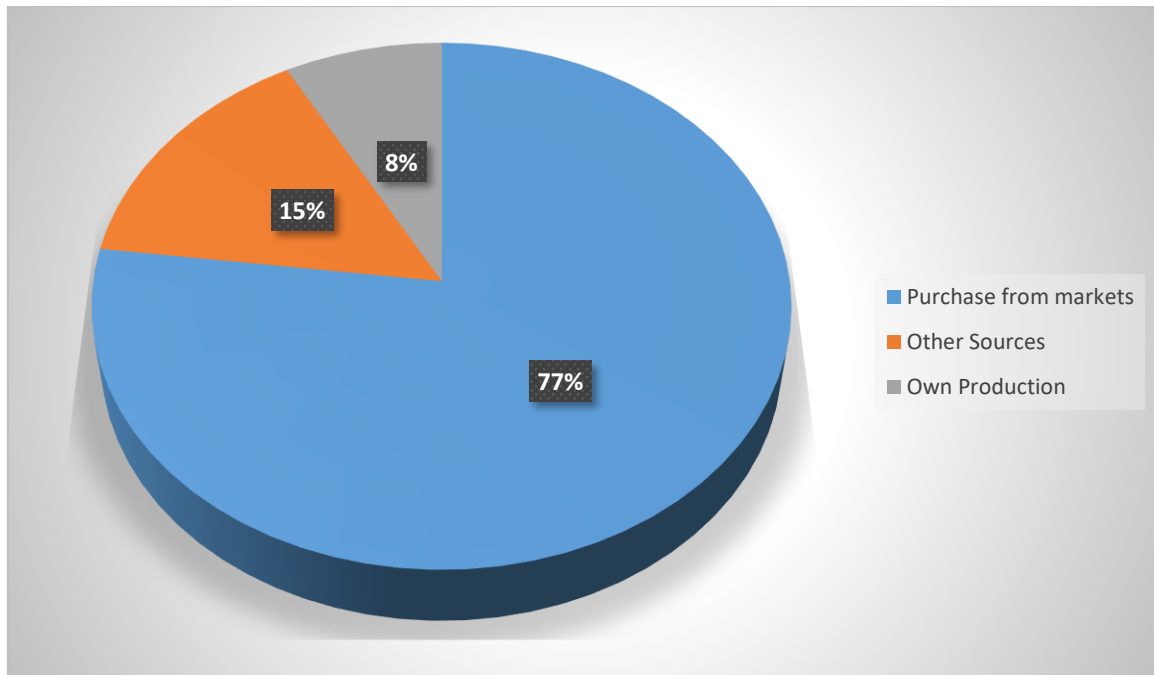
Approximately 21% of recipient households satisfy their whole food grain needs through the OMS program, while 79% rely on market sources along with OMS program (Figure -4). Among these 79% households: 77% buy additional rice from markets, 15% get food through informal routes, and 8% grow their own (Figure -5). The variety of sources highlights both the program's significance and limits.

Figure-4: Share of Households Depending Solely on OMS



Source: Field Survey

Figure-5: Alternate Food Sources for Beneficiaries

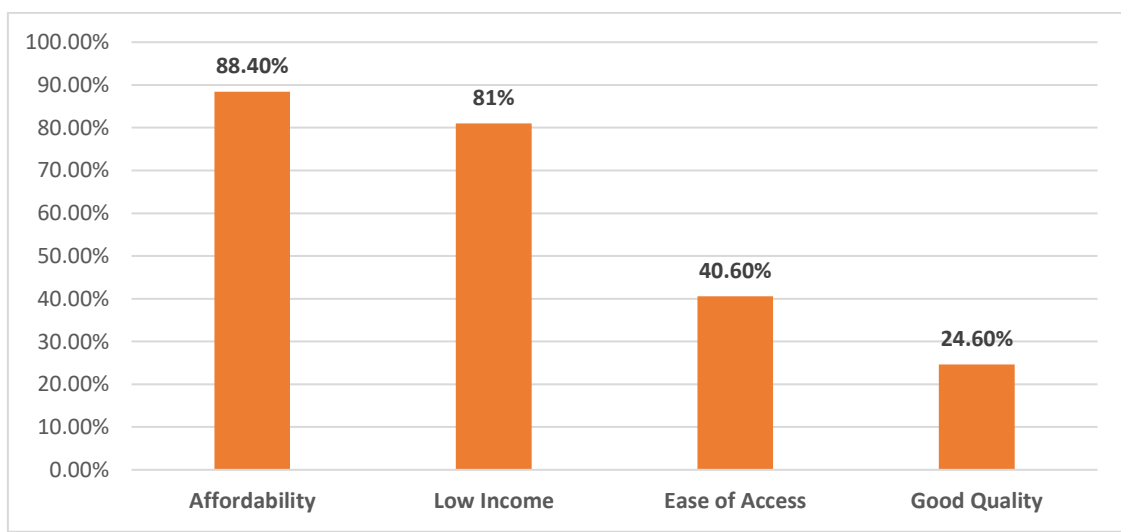


Source: Field Survey

4.3.3 Motivation for Purchasing from OMS

The primary reasons for using OMS are affordability- lower price (88.4%), low income (81%), ease of access (40.6%), and good quality (24.6%) (Figure-6). These findings confirm that price and accessibility are the key motivators. These percentages were derived from the response of 500 respondents.

Figure -6: Contributing Factors for Choosing OMS



Source: Field Survey.

4.4 Household Consumption & Food Security

Table 5 compares average household food security indicators between subsidy recipients and comparable non-recipients. Beneficiary households allocate 8% less of their income to food compared to non-beneficiaries, all else being equal, consistent with accessing lower-cost basic food staples. Critically, recipients report improved calorie intake and reduced levels of food insecurity. Specifically, subsidized families consume an average of 2,100 kcal per capita per day, significantly higher than the 1,800-kcal consumed by control households ($p<0.05$). Additionally, beneficiaries have a lower food insecurity index (0 = no insecurity, 10 = worst) at 4.8, compared to 6.2 among non-beneficiaries ($p<0.01$). These findings demonstrate that subsidies effectively enhance nutritional intake.

Moreover, recipient households realize savings on staple foods, enabling them to reallocate spending toward nutritionally diverse foods, such as a 15% increase in expenditure on vegetables and lentils. This aligns with international research suggesting that reliable staple food access reduces the need for coping strategies that compromise dietary diversity.

The analysis further highlights that after subsidy receipt, beneficiary households increased rice consumption by 5 kg per month compared to controls, a statistically significant difference ($p<0.01$). Beneficiaries also experienced a meaningful reduction of 1.1 points in their food insecurity score relative to controls ($p<0.01$). Importantly, the study found no evidence of negative substitution effects, such as overall expenditure cuts or reductions in purchases of other nutritious foods. This supports the conclusion that subsidies shifted household food budgets toward healthier dietary choices without decreasing overall calorie purchases.

Table-5: Subsidy Impact on Household Consumption and Food Security.

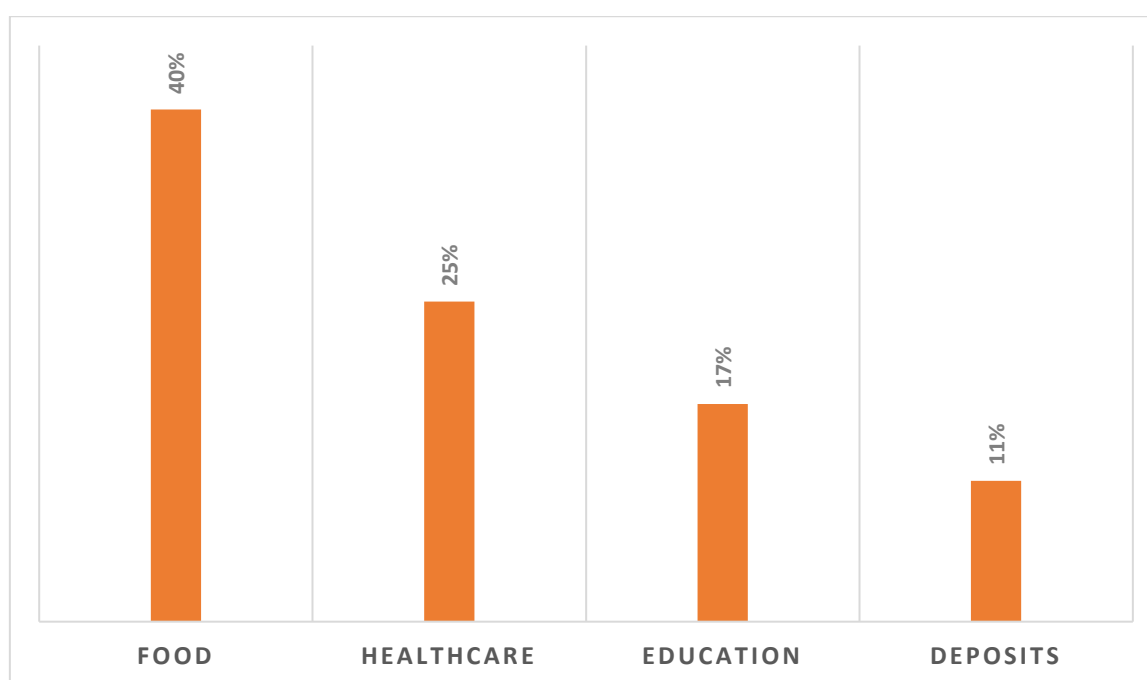
Outcome	Treated Mean	Control Mean	t-statistics
Rice consumption (kg/month)	32.0	25.5	+5.0*** (1.2)
Monthly food expenditure (Tk)	5,000	4,800	-200 (150)
Calorie intake (kcal per capita)	2,100	1,800	+210** (80)
Food insecurity score (0–10)	4.8	6.2	-1.1*** (0.4)
Observations	150 (matched)	150 (matched)	–

*Standard errors in parentheses; ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.01$.

4.5 OMS Program and Socio-Economic Outcomes

Savings from buying subsidized food enabled households to transfer their spending to other areas. 500 respondents used their savings on food (40%), healthcare (25%), education (17%), and deposits (11%). This suggests that the OMS program improves economic resilience.

Figure-7: Allocation of Savings from OMS Purchase



Source: Field Survey.

4.6 Food Security Outcomes

4.6.1 Impact on Local Market Prices

A sample of 81 dealers found a 22% decrease in rice sales and a 17% decrease in wheat sales during OMS operations (Table-6). This demonstrates the program's market stabilizing impact.

Table-6: Monthly Sales of Rice and Atta During OMS Operation

Product	OMS Off	OMS On	Change (%)
Rice (amount in kg)	24,046	18,730	-22%
Atta (amount in kg)	3,435	2,836	-17%

Source: Field Survey of FPMU.

4.6.2 Price Comparison Between OMS and Market

Table-7 shows large pricing differences: BDT 16.24 per kg for rice and BDT 19.66 per kg for atta. These subsidies result in an average monthly family savings of BDT 500.

Table-7: OMS vs Market Prices

Commodity	OMS Price/kg	Market Price/kg	Difference/kg
Rice	BDT 30	BDT 46.24	BDT 16.24
Atta	BDT 24	BDT 43.33	BDT 19.66

Source: Field Survey of FPMU.

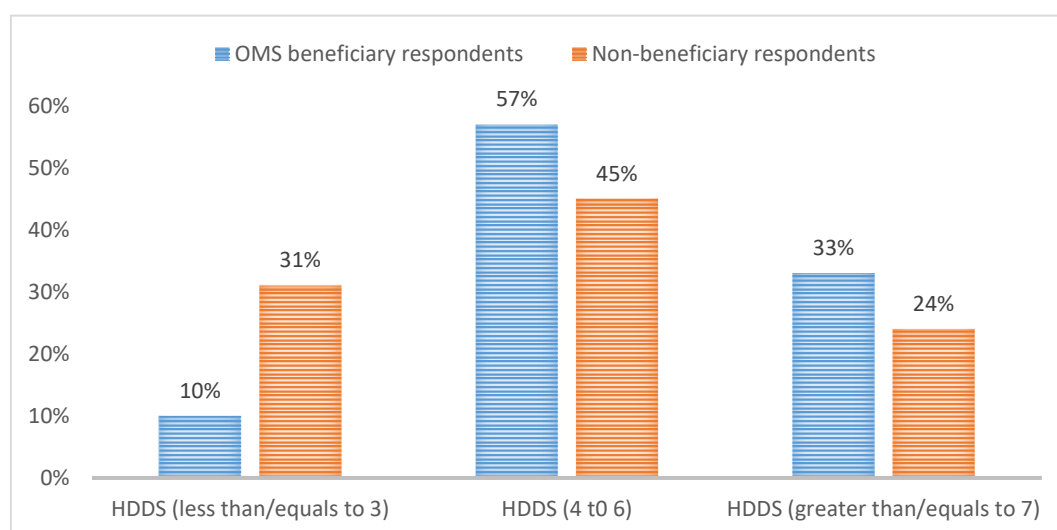
4.6.3 HDDS and FCS Scores

Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS):

HDDS is a widely used food security indicator (Huluka, A.T., & Wondimagegnhu, B.A, 2019).

- 33% of OMS recipients scored "high" (7+ food categories), compared to 24% of non-beneficiaries.
- OMS average HDDS is 6.15, compared to 5.8 among non-beneficiaries (Figure-8).

Figure-8: HDDS Score Comparison



Source: FPMU report.

Food Consumption Score (FCS):

Food consumption is the main food security indicator of WFP.

- 59% of beneficiaries were in the borderline range; while 25.6% in acceptable range.

- Only 1% of OMS beneficiaries had a "high acceptable" score ($FCS \geq 52.5$), where 0% among non-beneficiaries (Table-8).

Table-8: Food Consumption Score Categories

FCS Range	OMS Beneficiaries	Non-Beneficiaries
Poor (0–28)	14%	30%
Borderline (28–42)	59%	47%
Acceptable (42–52)	25.6%	23.2%
High Acceptable (≥ 52.5)	1.0%	0%

Source: Field Survey of FPMU.

4.7 Challenges and User Satisfaction

4.7.1 Reported Problems

Among 500 beneficiaries, 14% reported problems, particularly long lines (68.6%), dealer misconduct (8.6%), and date scheduling challenges (14.3%) (Table-9).

Table-9: Problems Faced by Beneficiaries

Problems	Share of Respondents who faced
Long lines	68.6%
Dealer misconduct	8.6%
Date Scheduling Challenges	14.3%

Source: Field Survey.

4.7.2 Proposed Solutions

Respondents who faced problems proposed some solution to their problems. These proposed solutions include: increase of food grain supply (38.6%), implementing a card-based

distribution system (24.3%), improving monitoring (15.7%), packed food grain (like packet atta) (8.6%), improving quality (4.3%), dealers location diversification (1.4%), digitalizing the distribution system (1.4%) and many more.

Table-10: Proposed Solutions by Respondents

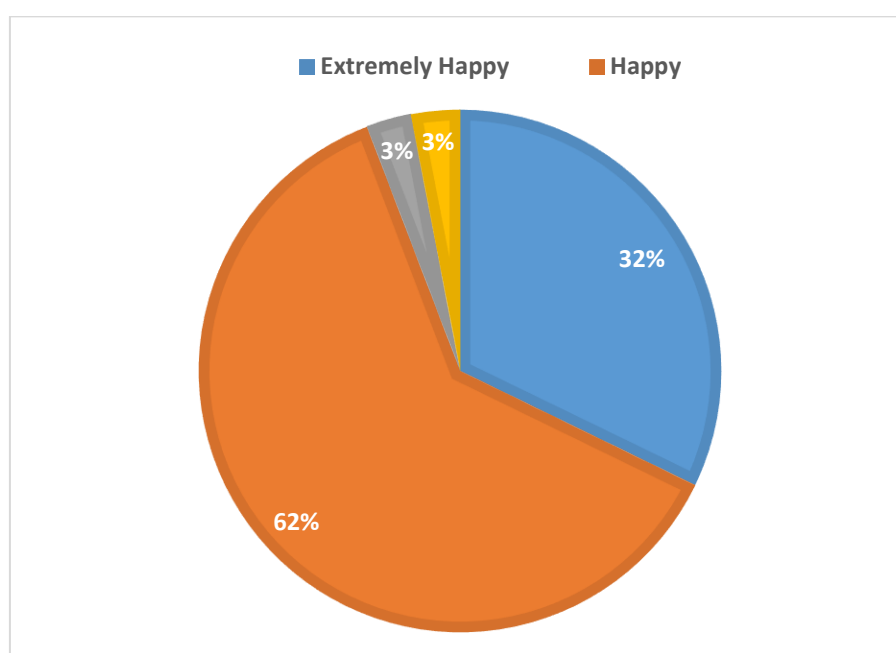
Solution Types	Share of Respondents who proposed
Increase of Allocation	38.6%
Implementation of card-based Distribution	24.3%
Improvement of Monitoring	15.7%
Introduction of Packet Food grain	8.6%
Improvement of the food grain quality	4.3%
Diversification of dealers Locations	1.4%
Digitalization of the distribution system	1.4%

Source: Field Survey.

4.7.3 Satisfaction Levels

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the OMS program: 32.2% were "extremely happy," 62% were "happy", 2.8% were "neutral", and 3% were "dissatisfied" (Figure -9).

Figure-9: Beneficiary Satisfaction Levels



Source: Field Survey.

4.8 Insights from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions were held in three districts: Pirojpur, Sirajganj, and Sherpur, to better assess the program's impact on the ground. A varied group of stakeholders—local traders, OMS dealers, recipients, and key government officials—shared their experiences and viewpoints.

Positive Outcomes of the OMS Program

Participants largely agreed that the OMS program had a substantial impact on food security, not just for direct recipients but also for the larger community by stabilizing market prices. Some of the major advantages listed include:

- **Enhanced food security:** Beneficiary families reported greater availability to key food grains, alleviating concerns about food scarcity.
- **Positive ripple effects:** Increased supply stabilized local market prices, benefiting non-beneficiaries as well.
- **Economic relief:** The program provided economic relief to low-income households, allowing them to focus on other needs.
 - **Increased purchasing power:** Subsidized rice and atta (flour) increase purchasing power, allowing households to invest in more nutritious and diversified meals.
 - **Price drop:** Local traders reported that price decreases of 2-3 BDT per kg for rice and 3-4 BDT for atta during OMS program days.

Challenges Faced in the OMS Distribution Process

Despite its beneficial influence, some issues emerged from the conversations, highlighting areas that demand immediate attention:

- Many OMS store close earlier than expected, causing annoyance among customers.
- Beneficiaries reported long wait periods for food grains, often starting late at night or early in the morning.
- Long lines might lead to missed work and lost money. For many women, it caused physical discomfort and health issues.
- Queue issues: People jostled and crowded to get to the head of the line, causing tension and safety concerns.
- Loopholes in monitoring led to persons receiving food grains many times, as reported by some participants.
- Limited stock led to empty-handed returns, despite long lines.

Why the Wealthier Avoid the OMS Lines

Interestingly, while the program is intended for the underprivileged, some well-off persons who technically qualify frequently decline to participate. The debates identified various causes for this.

- **Social stigma:** Queuing for subsidized meals is generally associated with poverty and humiliation.
- **Inconvenience:** Long wait times and congested circumstances discourage participation.
- **Perceived ineligibility:** Some individuals believe the program only benefits the economically underprivileged, leading them to decline participation.

Chapter 5: Policy Implications and Recommendations

Our study reveals that, while Bangladesh's rice and wheat subsidy programs provide genuine and substantial assistance to people, there are significant gaps in how the system operates. In the part that follows, we discuss significant lessons and actionable policy recommendations based on our worldwide experience and results.

5.1 Assessing Effectiveness

The subsidy program is effective in stabilizing prices and assisting the poorest: price increases are reduced, and vulnerable households eat more staple foods. These outcomes are consistent with the program's aims. However, the fiscal cost is significant; the budget for FY2025-26 surpasses Tk9,663 crore (source: mof.gov.bd) (33% higher than the previous year). Policymakers must consider whether the incremental food security improvements worth the cost, especially given other pressing requirements. Our study implies that subsidies boost beneficiaries' wellbeing, but at a declining rate for each extra money invested owing to dilution by non-poor recipients.

5.2 Addressing Inefficiencies and Mistargeting

Mistargeting is a significant finding: many recipient households are not the poorest (inclusion mistake), and many low-income families are excluded. This is alarming, considering the government's own confession that “significant portions fail to reach the poorest” (source: unb.com.bd)

To increase targeting precision, we suggest utilizing data-driven beneficiary lists. Update the BBS poverty maps and use socioeconomic datasets to identify vulnerable families. Integrate this into current systems such as the National Social Safety Net Portal.

Aadhaar-linked ration cards have helped minimize duplicates and fake cards, contributing to India's success with PDS. Bangladesh might implement a similar digital ID check at OMS stores to guarantee that the cardholder is the intended recipient.

Community verification is another useful tool to increase targeting precision. In distant locations, include local leaders or UP officials in checking applicant lists on a regular basis to identify anomalies such as deceased homes or wealthier families and promote actual poor.

Reducing leakages not only improves equity but also saves public money that may be repurposed. For example, according to the UNB research, 22% of subsidies presently go to the richest 20% (source: unb.com.bd); tighter targeting might redirect such shares to poor families or reduce budget waste.

5.3 Improving Delivery Mechanisms

The existing in-kind distribution (rice/wheat) has benefits and drawbacks. It ensures the real item required, but it introduces logistical issues (procurement, storage, and delivery expenses) and restricts options. We recommend using digital financial transfers or meal vouchers as an alternative/complement. For example, India's direct benefit transfer (DBT) experiments for food subsidies allow recipients to buy grains at market prices, possibly lowering overhead.

Cash transfers (as in Ethiopia's urban PSNP model) can be more efficient if market supply is consistent. Given the problems in rural Bangladesh, a hybrid strategy may be best: maintain grain subsidies in distant areas where markets are few, while providing cash or e-vouchers in heavily populated areas. To minimize sudden nutritional shortages, any adjustment should be gradual and well monitored.

5.4 Learning from India and Ethiopia

India: India's PDS experience demonstrates the relevance of digitization for nutrition results. (source: ideasforindia.in) Our findings, which show that subsidized grains stimulate home cooking and reduce junk food intake, imply that Bangladesh may combine nutrition education with subsidies. Furthermore, India's decision to universalize grain entitlements under the NFSA suggests that, given budgetary flexibility, Bangladesh may explore increasing coverage to disadvantaged people that are not now eligible. However, caution is advised: India continues to struggle with fiscal sustainability and, on occasion, perennial buffers (stockpiles). Bangladesh should emphasize effective investment above broad coverage.

Ethiopia: The PSNP experience focuses on resilience development. Beyond handouts, PSNP connects recipients to public infrastructure (e.g., canals and terraces), which Bangladesh might use during lean seasons. Some existing programs, such as VGF/FFW, already perform this. Strengthening such components can boost community assets (such as irrigation and roads) while also complementing food aid. Ethiopia also demonstrates the need of constant donor support; Bangladesh should try to fully finance its program to ensure that subsidies do not run out when they are most needed. Ethiopia's conditionality (exchanging labor for food) works for the able-bodied; Bangladesh may explore expanding such programs for young adults to increase output.

5.5 Targeting Vulnerable Groups

Even with enhanced lists, certain groups require particular care. Survey responses and highlights show that urban slum people are frequently overlooked since the targeting concentrates on rural poverty. Policies must adjust by evaluating urban poverty areas and allocating resources appropriately. Similarly, climate-vulnerable coastal and flood-prone locations demand an upfront expenditure (as noted by the government's partial geographic targeting, source: unb.com.bd).

5.6 Fiscal Sustainability

Given the significant budget share, a long-term perspective is required. Food subsidies are largely sustainable if they remain between 0.15% and 0.2% of GDP (as they already are). However, any rising trend (e.g., a 33% rise) must be supported by comparable advantages. Policymakers should perform frequent cost-benefit analyses, such as comparing subsidy expenditures to measured reductions in hunger or poverty. If benefits plateau, different social initiatives (vocational training, microcredit for the poor) may provide better returns on investment.

5.7 Recommendations in a Summary

Our research finds that, while Bangladesh's Open Market Sale (OMS) program is critical to food security, it confronts various constraints that restrict its effectiveness—particularly for low-income, working-class households. Based on community input and best practices, we offer the practical changes below to improve its accessibility, efficiency, and fairness:

1. **Improve targeting efficiency:** Improve the targeting efficiency by using updated poverty statistics, biometric verification, and community committees to guarantee subsidies reach eligible low-income families.
2. **Adjust Distribution Hours for Working People:** Distribute OMS food grains in the evenings, from 4:00 PM and 10:00 PM, so that day laborers and office people may get food on their way home without compromising work hours.
3. **Card-based Distribution System:** Implement a card-based distribution system to avoid long queues. Moreover, a smart card-based system may be introduced for scheduling purchases. This would assist to cut long wait times, eliminate duplication, and make delivery more orderly and courteous.
4. **Introduction of Technology:** Combine biometric authentication (facial or fingerprint) with a digital database containing NID numbers and family information may be introduced. This can track household involvement in other government safety net programs and verify that food grains are distributed to the correct persons.
5. **Distribute food grains in pre-packed quantities:** Serve rice and atta in sealed packages. This can help:
 - ✓ Maintain the quality and weight of food grains.
 - ✓ Make transportation easy for consumers.
 - ✓ Prevent sellers from charging extra for packing materials, such as polyethylene bags.
6. **Increase the quantity of each purchase and extend the validity period:** Allow households to buy 10 kg of rice and 10 kg of atta at once for 15 days, using smart cards or digital ID. This will:
 - ✓ Consumers may save time and money on travel.
 - ✓ Reduce the number of visits required.
 - ✓ Reduce the workload for OMS dealers and field officers.
7. **Enhance On-Site Monitoring:** Ensure that authorized authorities visit OMS distribution stations on a regular basis to prevent misconduct and preserve order.
8. **Real-time supervision using photos and videos:** Require the supervising officer at each OMS point to provide live images or brief (under 1-minute) video clips to a central monitoring cell (for example, at DG Food) every 1-2 hours, particularly during opening and closing hours.
9. **Streamline Supply Chain Logistics:** Whenever feasible, transmit atta straight from the mill to the OMS sites, avoiding storage godowns unless necessary. This minimizes handling time, lowers storage costs, and improves supply efficiency. The similar approach may be utilized with rice, especially during milling seasons.
10. **Prioritize high-density work areas:** Expand OMS distribution near industrial areas, such as textile manufacturers, and schedule sales after working hours to better serve daily wage earners.
11. **Promoting Development:** To promote development, consider expanding food-for-work programs (e.g., canal digging, rural road construction) to enable the able-bodied poor to "earn" grain and improve assets.

12. Nutrition Focus: Along with grain subsidies, promote fortified rice and atta and food diversification (based on Indian PDS results that subsidies help enhance overall nutrition).

By implementing these measures, Bangladesh may maintain the primary benefits of its food subsidies (price stability and poverty assistance) while minimizing waste and increasing effect. Importantly, evidence-based changes, such as those described here, will assist to meet constitutional obligations and guarantee that social security actually benefits the most disadvantaged.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This research conducted a detailed examination of Bangladesh's rice and wheat subsidy programs, with an emphasis on their impact on low-income households. The findings, based on primary data obtained through household surveys and qualitative interviews in the districts of Pirojpur, Sherpur, and Sirajganj, demonstrate that the food subsidy plan contributes significantly to household wellbeing. Subsidized food access has helped to stabilize basic prices, increase food intake, and strengthen household resilience during times of economic difficulty.

The empirical data show that beneficiary families had considerably greater calorie consumption and lower food insecurity scores than non-beneficiaries. These results are consistent with the main aims of the OMS program and with data from similar food security programs in other developing nations, such as India's Public Distribution System. (Drèze & Khera, 2017).

However, this study reveals a number of important problems that impede the program's ideal effectiveness. One major concern is misallocation of resources. A considerable proportion of subsidies are obtained by households over the poverty line, whereas a large number of poor and vulnerable families are excluded. Such inclusion and exclusion issues match concerns stated in previous government assessments (UNB, 2024), calling into doubt the program's equality and efficacy.

Furthermore, the budgetary burden of maintaining large-scale food subsidies continues to rise, raising worries about long-term viability. Operational inefficiencies, such as leaks, increased procurement prices, and logistical delays, reduce the value of public investment. These findings indicate that, while the program provides an important safety net, its full potential is now hampered by operational difficulties.

6.2 Study Limitations

Several constraints should be recognized. This study uses cross-sectional data, which limits its potential to capture long-term or dynamic changes in family welfare. While attempts were made to confirm consumption and income data, certain factors may have been self-reported, which might lead to biases. Furthermore, the study views the food subsidy program as an external intervention, with no regard for design changes (e.g., rice vs. wheat allocations) or geographical implementation disparities.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

As Bangladesh's development progresses, ensuring that the most disadvantaged households have consistent availability of food must remain a governmental priority. This study demonstrates that basic food subsidies are an important strategy for aiding low-income households. However, for the program to achieve its intended advantages on a large scale and throughout time, changes focusing on better targeting, enhanced delivery mechanisms, and accountable governance are required.

This study intends to contribute to continuing efforts to develop Bangladesh's food security architecture by providing evidence-based insights and grounded policy suggestions, as well as to inform a more effective and fair social protection framework in the future.

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⁷ [researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net)

⁸ ideasforindia.in

Appendix-A:



Research proposal on

Assessing the Effectiveness of Government Food Subsidies on Rice and Wheat in Bangladesh: Economic Implications for Low-Income Households

Submitted to:

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05 January 2025

Research Proposal: Assessing the Effectiveness of Government Food Subsidies on Rice and Wheat in Bangladesh: Economic Implications for Low-Income Households.

Background:

According to Article 15(a) of Bangladesh's Constitution, the government is required to provide basic necessities such as food, clothes, housing, education, and medical care to its population. Article 15(d) identifies social security as a basic right, particularly for vulnerable people.

In accordance with these constitutional requirements, the Bangladeshi government has launched a number of social safety net initiatives, which are classified into two categories: social empowerment and social protection. The former fosters human growth and economic inclusion, whereas the latter assists disadvantaged individuals and families.

Food subsidies, particularly for essentials like as rice and wheat, are an important aspect of these measures. These subsidies are intended to stabilize prices and assure affordability for low-income households. Food price fluctuation can have serious repercussions in a country where a large proportion of the population depends largely on these basics. Subsidy programs aim to solve this by easing the financial load on low-income households.

However, despite the scale of these programs—as evidenced by the 13.32% national budget allocation to food security and employment generation in 2023-2024 (equivalent to 2.21% of the total budget and 0.34% of GDP), there is still a need to critically evaluate their efficiency, effectiveness, and targeting accuracy. Furthermore, there are ongoing worries regarding inefficiencies, mistargeting, and potential market distortions. Lessons from nations such as India and Ethiopia might provide useful comparative views.

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact and efficacy of Bangladesh's food subsidy programs on rice and wheat, with a focus on low-income households.

Significance:

Food security remains a recurrent concern in Bangladesh. This study will provide crucial insights into the socio-economic implications of food subsidies, allowing us to better understand whether these programs accomplish their intended goals. The findings will promote evidence-based policy reform by identifying both advantages and unforeseen effects (for example, budgetary strain and market distortions). Furthermore, the study will provide comparative insights and contribute to the larger discussion about food subsidies in the context of poverty reduction and social protection.

Research Objectives:

To evaluate the effectiveness of government food subsidies in stabilizing rice and wheat prices.
To assess the economic impact of food subsidies on low-income households in Bangladesh.
To determine the extent to which subsidies contribute to poverty reduction and improved food security.
To identify inefficiencies and recommend improvements to the subsidy program.

Research Questions:

- a) What impact does the food subsidy program of the government have on rice and wheat prices and availability in Bangladesh?

- b) What are the economic benefits and drawbacks of food subsidies for low-income households?
- c) Do the existing subsidy schemes properly reach the poorest households?
- d) Do fluctuations in the market and government intervention influence the income and food security of low-income people?

Methodology:

This study will use a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Quantitative Technique:

Survey Design: Structured surveys will be administered to a stratified random sample of low-income households in urban and rural areas.

Indicators: Monthly food expenditure, caloric intake, income levels, and subsidy access.

Analytical Techniques: Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and difference-in-differences models to evaluate subsidy effects.

Qualitative Technique:

Interviews: In-depth interviews with policymakers, economists, and relevant government officials.

Focus Groups: Discussions with program beneficiaries to understand lived experiences and perceived program benefits and limitations.

Sampling Strategy:

A sample frame will be constructed based on national poverty maps and food assistance records.

Households will be selected using multistage cluster sampling.

Data Sources: Primary data will be acquired from field surveys and interviews. Secondary data will be acquired from government papers, publications, and relevant research studies studying the impact of the food subsidy program on food prices and the economy.

Expected Outcome:

- a) An empirical assessment of the subsidy program's impact on rice and wheat prices.
- b) Quantified benefits for household food security and economic resilience.
- c) Development of measurable indicators (e.g., targeting efficiency, changes in caloric intake) for assessing subsidy effectiveness.
- d) Identification of systemic inefficiencies, targeting errors, and areas for policy reform.
- e) Policy recommendations grounded in both data-driven evidence and stakeholder perspectives.

Conclusion:

This study will provide a detailed assessment of the government's food subsidy programs, focusing on their influence on rice and wheat markets, as well as the livelihoods of low-income people. The study's identification of both strengths and problems will help to make subsidy programs more equal, efficient, and sustainable in the fight against poverty and food insecurity.

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Gantt Chart for this Proposal:

Phase	Fall 2024	Spring 2025						
	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	July-25	
Proposal Submission								
Literature Review								
Methodology Development								
Data Collection & Analysis								
Writing the Thesis and Reviewing								
Finalization								

Appendix-B:

Annotated Bibliography

Journal Articles and Formal Reports (15)

1. **Ministry of Food, Government of Bangladesh (2023) - Annual Report on Food Subsidy Program.**
 - Annotation: This paper provides a thorough summary of the government's food subsidy schemes, with a particular emphasis on rice and wheat distribution. It is likely to include information on budget allocation, program reach, and evaluations of the program's performance in meeting food security objectives. As a main source, it is critical for comprehending the policy framework and implementation specifics.
2. **Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022) - Economic Impact of Food Subsidies in Bangladesh.**
 - Annotation: This research does a quantitative examination of the economic impact of food subsidies. It is likely to provide statistical data on how subsidies affect market pricing, household spending, and poverty levels. The data are critical for assessing the program's overall economic impact and effectiveness in reaching its target group.
3. **Rahman, M. (2021). Food Security and Government Subsidies: An Analysis of Bangladesh's Programs.**
 - Annotation: This journal article investigates the link between food security and government subsidies in Bangladesh. It provides an analytical viewpoint on the design, execution, and consequences of these initiatives, with an emphasis on their impact on food security. The research presumably evaluates the programs' strengths and faults and makes recommendations for improvement.
4. **Conning, J., & Kevane, M. (2000). Community-based targeting mechanisms for social safety nets.**
 - Annotation: This study investigates how community engagement in beneficiary selection might increase the accuracy and acceptability of social safety net systems. The authors analyze case studies from several developing nations to determine the strengths (local knowledge, social responsibility) and drawbacks (elite capture, exclusion mistakes) of community-based targeting. Its findings supplement the OMS report's consideration of beneficiary identification and related governance concerns.

5. **Rai, R. K., Kumar, S., Sekher, M., Pritchard, B., & Rammohan, A. (2013). A life-cycle approach to food and nutrition security in India.** *Public Health Nutrition*, 18(5), 944–949.
 - Annotation: This research takes a life cycle approach, looking at nutritional vulnerabilities from birth to old age and evaluating how focused treatments might address them. Its notion of combining several safety nets influenced the OMS report's use of Household Dietary Diversity Scores (HDDS) and Food Consumption Scores (FCS) as complementing measurements of nutritional outcomes.
6. **George, N. A., & McKay, F. H. (2019). The Public Distribution System and food security in India.** *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(...), 5643.
 - Annotation: This article uses a mix of anecdotal and quantitative data to assess India's PDS and its effects on household food supply and access. It focuses on logistical limits and governance difficulties, providing context for comparable challenges in Bangladesh's OMS deployment.
7. **Subbarao, K. (2002). Systematic shocks and social protection: Role and effectiveness of public works programs (Social Protection Discussion Paper Series No. SP 0302). World Bank.**
 - Annotation: Subbarao investigates how public works programs might protect households from economic shocks, concentrating on design elements that influence program responsiveness and impact. The paper's approach for analyzing shock response mechanisms serves as the foundation for the OMS report's assessment of how the program keeps food prices stable during lean seasons and crises.
8. **Rogers, B. L., & Coates, J. (2002). Food-based safety nets and related programs. Social Protection Discussion Paper Series. World Bank.**
 - Annotation: Rogers and Coates examine a variety of food-related initiatives (in-kind transfers, subsidized sales, vouchers), comparing aims, target demographics, and efficacy. Their categorization schema inspired the mixed methods design of the OMS report, as well as the metrics used to compare market stability to family food security.
9. **Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Population and Housing Census Report 2022. BBS.**
 - Annotation: The Census report provides baseline demographic and household composition statistics, most notably the national average household size of 4.26, which the OMS report compares to the greater family sizes recorded in Sirajganj, Sherpur, and Pirojpur.

10. **Mitu, M. M. P., Islam, K., Sarwar, S., Ali, M., & Amin, M. R. (2022). Spatial differences in diet quality and economic vulnerability to food insecurity in Bangladesh: Results from the 2016 Household Income and Expenditure Survey.** *Sustainability*, 14(9), 5643.
 - Annotation: Using HDDS and associated indicators, this study maps regional differences in dietary variety and susceptibility. Its approach for scoring and interpreting HDDS is directly relevant to the OMS report's dietary diversity assessment and interpretation of comparative food security across recipient groups.
11. **Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2022. BBS.**
 - Annotation: The HIES 2022 report contains thorough information on household size, income distribution, and spending trends in Bangladesh. The OMS report utilizes these numbers as a national reference point for comparing the survey districts' socio-economic features and income profiles.
12. **Food and Agriculture Organization. (2023). The State of Food and Nutrition Security 2023.**
 - Annotation: This global study provides up-to-date information on malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and income-related food insecurity. Its national and international standards serve as the foundation for the OMS report's conceptualization of Bangladesh's food security concerns, as well as helping to confirm FCS analysis criteria.
13. **Mallik, N. S. (2017). Achieving sustainable social safety nets in Bangladesh.** *Bangladesh Journal of Administration and Management*, 28(2).
 - Annotation: Mallik questions the viability and scope of Bangladesh's social protection measures, particularly food-based programs. Her ideas for improving monitoring and targeting methods closely reflect the OMS report's policy recommendations, particularly those concerning digitalization and dealer responsibility.
14. **Aouad, A., Ramdas, K., & Sungu, A. (2024). Digitized Indian Micro-Grocery Transactions Reveal that Grain Subsidies Reduce Junk Food Buying by Low-Income Shoppers. Wharton Research Paper.**
 - Annotation: This study examines approximately 10 million micro-grocery transactions in urban and peri-urban India from January 2022 to December 2023 to evaluate the impact of an enhanced grain subsidy under the PDS. Using a difference-in-differences methodology, it shows that subsidy users raise staple grain purchases by 15% and lower "junk food" spending by 12% in the next six months. Results stand up under multiple robustness checks.

15. Akter, S., & Basher, S. A. (2014). The impacts of food price and income shocks on household food security and economic well-being: Evidence from rural Bangladesh. *Global Environmental Change*, 25(1), 150–162.

- Annotation: Using data from 2005-2010, the study shows that a 10% spike in staple food prices cuts rural Bangladeshi households' calorie intake by 3.5% and dietary diversity by 5%. An equivalent income boost offsets about two-thirds of the calorie loss but does little for diversity, highlighting the need for price stabilization and income support measures.

Newspapers and Grey Literature (09)

1. **The Daily Star (Bangladesh). (2024, March 15). "Rice Price Hike Hits Low-Income Families Hard."**

- Annotation: This article discusses the impact of increased rice prices on low-income families in Bangladesh. It is expected to emphasize the difficulties these households have in acquiring inexpensive food, emphasizing the significance of efficient food assistance programs.

2. **The Financial Express (Bangladesh). (2023, July 10). "Budget Allocation for Food Security Increases."**

- Annotation: This article discusses the government's budget allocations for food security initiatives. It is expected to examine the effects of increasing spending for food subsidies and other actions targeted at guaranteeing food security for disadvantaged groups.

3. **Majumder, A. I. (2025, May 17). 5.5m families to get 6-month food aid per year thru food friendly programme: Ali Imam. Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).**

- Annotation: In May 2025, Food Adviser Ali Imam Majumder revealed that Bangladesh's Food Friendly Program will increase its coverage from 5 million to 5.5 million low-income families in FY2025-26, and provide subsidized food support for five to six months every year. The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh has around 1.465 million tons of rice and wheat inventories, with plans to buy 1.4 million tons of native Boro rice to reduce the need for urgent imports.

4. **Ferdous, F. (2025, June 19). Increased investment 'fails' to fix flaws in Bangladesh's social protection targeting. United News of Bangladesh. unb.com.bd**

- Annotation: Despite a budget increase to Tk 1.16 lakh crore for FY2025-26, Bangladesh's social protection remains mistargeted, with 22% of benefits going to the richest. Digital tools have not closed urban-rural gaps or reached all needy, straining finances and highlighting the need for more precise targeting.

5. **FAO. (2021). "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021."**
 - Annotation: This yearly report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations provides a worldwide perspective on food security and nutrition. While it is not particular to Bangladesh, it does give context for understanding global food security concerns and trends, as well as the importance of social safety nets such as food subsidies.
6. **ActionAid Bangladesh. (2020). "Hunger Watch Report: The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security."**
 - Annotation: This paper investigates the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on food security in Bangladesh. It is anticipated to analyze how the epidemic has affected food availability, access, and cost, as well as the government's reaction via food subsidy programs and other actions.
7. **Oxfam. (2018). "The Right to Food in Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities."**
 - Annotation: This Oxfam report investigates the implementation of the right to food in Bangladesh. It examines the barriers that disadvantaged groups confront in obtaining appropriate food and assesses the government's policies and initiatives, including food subsidies, in achieving this right.
8. **IFPRI. (Various Years). "Bangladesh Food Policy Briefs."**
 - Annotation: The International Food Policy Research Institute provides policy briefs on many elements of Bangladesh's food policy. These papers include quick evaluations of contemporary concerns, such as food subsidies, price stability, and food security, as well as evidence-based policy suggestions.
9. **Government of Bangladesh. (Various Years). "National Food Policy."**
 - Annotation: The National Food Policy explains the government's strategic approach to ensuring food security. It discusses the goals, tactics, and programs associated with food production, distribution, and access, as well as the function of food subsidies.