

3RD GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY, FOOD SAFETY & SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

May 21-22, 2018 | New York, USA

Poverty and food security analysis of handloom weaver households in Bangladesh

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Handloom industry is the most important cottage industry in Bangladesh but many of the handloom weavers are in vulnerable situation. Poverty and food security are intricately interlinked and it should be analyzed in different dimension. This paper examines the calorie intake level, factors influencing calorie intake and problems faced by the handloom weavers in a selected area of Ullapara Upazila of Sirajganj District. A sample size of 100 handloom weaver households was randomly selected from three villages. Pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect data. Both tabular and econometric techniques were used to analyze the collected data. To assess the calorie intake level of the sample households, the consumption data of seven days was measured by the each person per day calorie intake level through standard value of 100 gm each food item. To determine the factor influencing calorie intake multiple regression analysis was carried out. Calorie intake level and food consumption scores were used to measure poverty and food security. According to calorie intake level 14% of the handloom weavers belonged to hardcore poor whose average calorie intake was 1728.14 kcal and 44% weaver belonged to absolute poor whose average calorie intake was 2018.37 kcal and the rest 42% of the respondents belonged to non-poor whose average calorie intake was 2271.85 kcal. Food consumption scores unveiled that 8% weaver households had poor food consumption while 38% weaver households had borderline food consumption; 32 % had acceptable low food consumption and 22 % weaver households had acceptable high food consumption. Age and family size have negative impact on calorie intake. Among reported problems low wage rate was ranked the main problem faced by the handloom weaver. Bangladesh Handloom Board, government and non-government organizations and institutions can take specialized policies for handloom weavers to reduce poverty and strengthen food security.

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