



# Bangladesh

## FOOD SECURITY MONITORING

May - August 2023  
Disaster Impact

Remote Household Food  
Security Survey Brief



This brief was developed by WFP in August 2023, based on remote household food security surveys conducted in May, June, July, and August 2023. During the monsoon season. This issue has been merged, apart from the regular monthly report to capture the disaster impact.



# Bangladesh: IN NUMBERS



More than four in ten low-income households are currently food insecure.



## 24%

OF PEOPLE ON AVERAGE ARE FOOD INSECURE (rCARI)<sup>1</sup>



Food security situation worsened further due to recurrent natural disasters during the monsoon season.



## 70%

RESORTING TO COPING STRATEGIES DUE TO RECURRENT SHOCKS

*Livelihood-based coping strategies*<sup>2</sup>



46% purchased food on credit



26% reduced expense on health



20% spent their savings



19% received assistance

Food security varies across the divisions, population and climate hotspots.



## 45%

Low-income households were food insecure, and female-headed households suffered more.



## 27%

households reported severe impact of cyclones, floods, flash floods, and landslides.



## 71%

of the households reported significant food prices increase.

1. Remote Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Insecurity (CARI). The remote comprehensive food security index (rCARI) is an aggregated food security index used to report on a population's comprehensive food security. The indicators used to calculate this are: (i) food consumption scores, (ii) livelihood coping mechanisms, (iii) income sources, and (iv) income changes due to the shock .

2. The Livelihood Coping Strategies Index (LCSI) builds on the understanding of the behaviours vulnerable households engage in to meet their immediate food security needs in times of crisis or shock.





## In Brief

### Recurrent Flash floods, heatwaves, and cyclones severely impacted household food security.

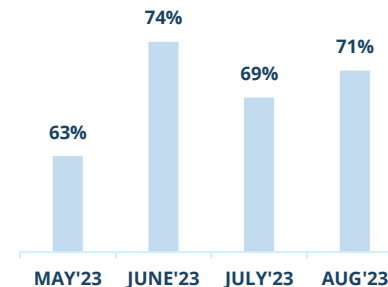
**More than two** in ten households (24%) were food insecure on average in August, an increasing trend from May. This year, the impact of El Niño was evident with delayed rainfall and more heatwaves in the hotspot zones of Bangladesh. August was the most affected month of the season by severe flash floods in the Chattogram and Sylhet divisions, heatwaves in Rajshahi and throughout the country, cyclones, landslides, etc. The food security indicator shows a similar trend to last year, indicating that natural disasters threaten food security on top of price shocks and chronic poverty, especially in low-income households.

Recurrent natural disasters hit many parts of the country, causing food insecurity and reliance on negative coping. **Food security worsened nationwide in all the divisions due to heat waves and natural disasters like cyclones, flash floods, and landslides. Income sources were vital in combating seasonal food insecurity despite price hikes. Households in specific hotspot areas suffered double than average.**

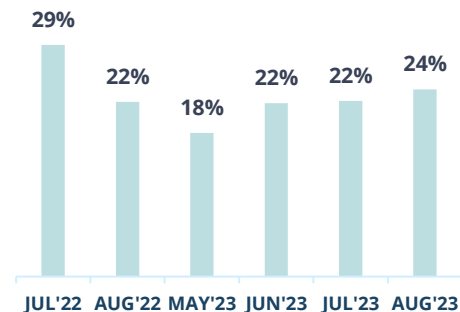
Households with female heads and disabilities suffered the most during the monsoon season.

The survey revealed that 47 percent were food insecure in low-income households, compared to 9 percent in medium-income households and less than 3 percent in high-income households. **High food prices, disaster impact, and loss of income remained to be the biggest shock.** Concerns over high food prices remained increasing and Some 71 percent of households said the rise was their deepest concern and significantly affected their well-being. **More households relied on negative coping strategies to put food on the table.** More than seven in ten households applied livelihood-based coping strategies such as borrowing money, selling productive assets, or going into debt to buy food. On average, the percentage of households adopting stress and emergency increased kept rising over the season. Households continued relying both on food-based and livelihood-based coping strategies.

High coping - more than six to seven in ten households



Food security indicator (rCARI)

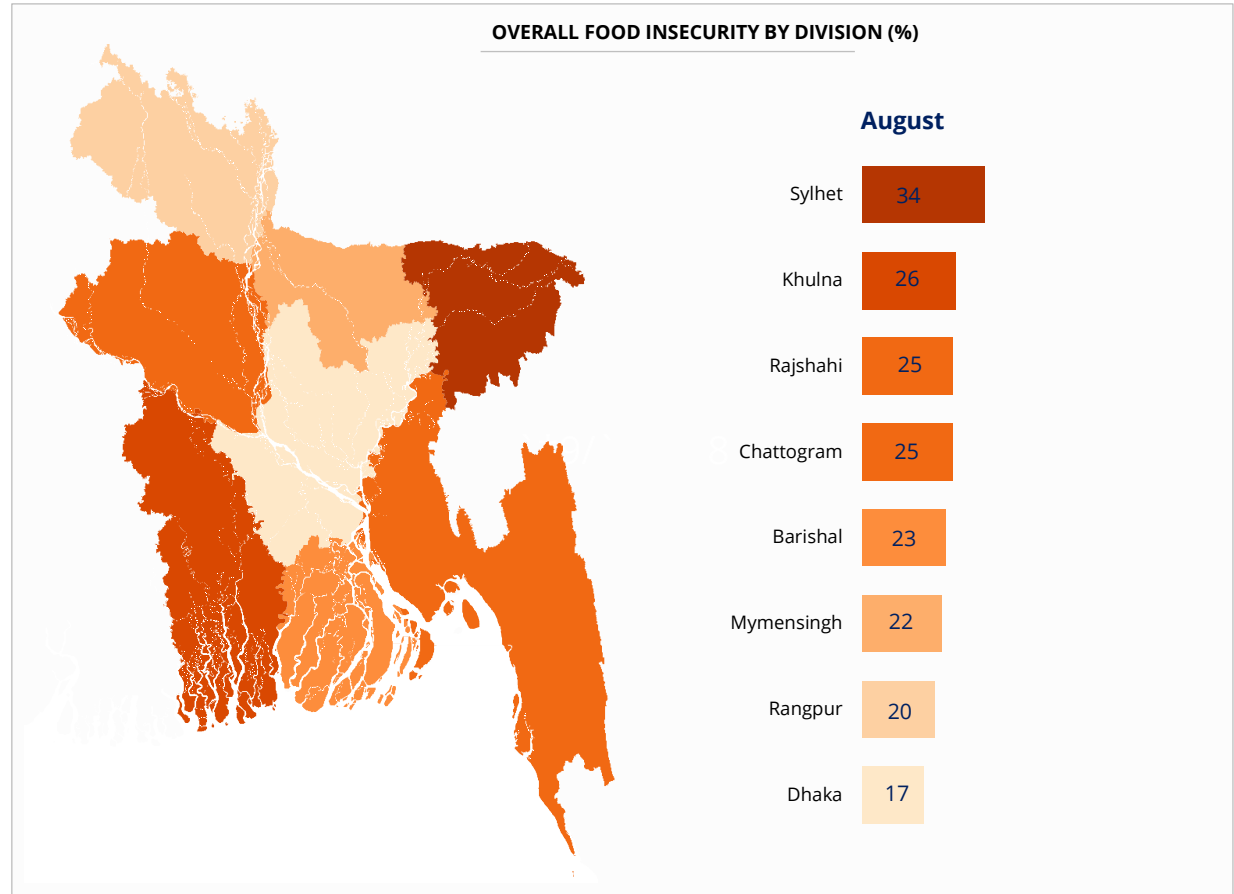




## Findings

**On average, food insecurity worsened nationwide (24%).** Households were highly vulnerable to natural disasters from May to August, as the recurrent disasters hit most of the divisions and devastated some pockets severely. On top of that, increased expenditure and negative coping to put nutritious food on the table was a calamitous hardship in many areas. Severe flash floods in Chattogram and Sylhet divisions put all the households in a terrible situation. Further disaggregated data into the districts and upazila showed severe food-based and livelihood-based coping. In Bandarban, Lama, and Thanchi areas, more than 70 percent of households had inadequate diets, and many skipped meals. The overall food insecurity was also high in the Sylhet division, although far less than the previous year. Khulna Barishal Rangpur divisions reported higher food insecurity due to fewer agricultural jobs. Heat waves in the northern region damaged vegetables in the field; the farmers continued to have counted losses.

On average, many households reported to live on credit. Purchasing food or other essential items on credit increased to 46 percent in August, from 32 percent of households in May. The low-income group had the highest food insecurity. In the Chattogram division, 58 percent and in the Sylhet division, 53 percent of low-income households were moderately to severely food insecure.



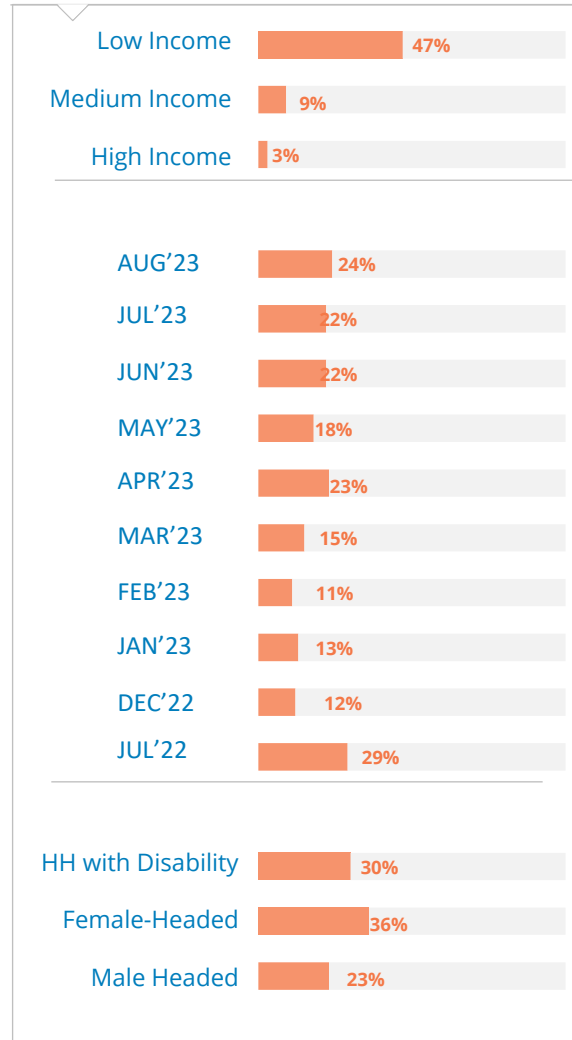


## Recurrent natural disasters hit hard the low-income, female-headed households with disabilities.

**Female-headed households and households with disabilities are poorer than the poorest male-headed households.**

The situation for the low-income group has always been the same in the series of this monthly survey, especially for the female-headed. Many households reported borrowing money to feed the family as the income was comparatively much less. Food insecurity in the low-income group was double the average. There has been a severe disaster in some areas of Bangladesh, where all income groups suffered due to disruption in market functionality. The low-income group desperately needed food and cash assistance. Significantly, few agricultural activities were in the field, including severe crop damages, and many sectors suffered from the slow business. Households with disabilities were also more food insecure than households without. During these tiring times of recurrent shocks, households with disabled people reported being most vulnerable. Only 20 percent of households reported receiving assistance in August. It was high in the May to August period for the disaster response activities by the government and other actors.

FOOD INSECURITY BY HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS in AUGUST(%)





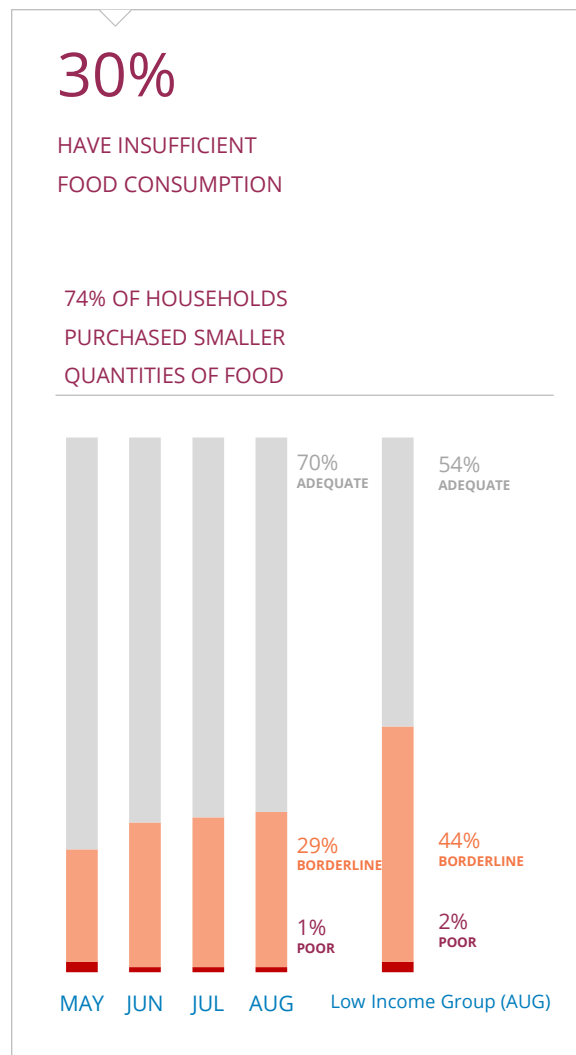
On average, three in ten households could not afford adequate diets, which is much higher (almost 5 in ten) in some areas due to natural disasters, low income, and other shocks.

An average of 70 percent of households in eight divisions reported having an acceptable diet. At the same time, 74 percent of households reported buying small quantities and less expensive food from the market. The food consumption score provides an average picture and does not represent the household's quality food intake. The FCS-N gives a glimpse of the nutritional impact.

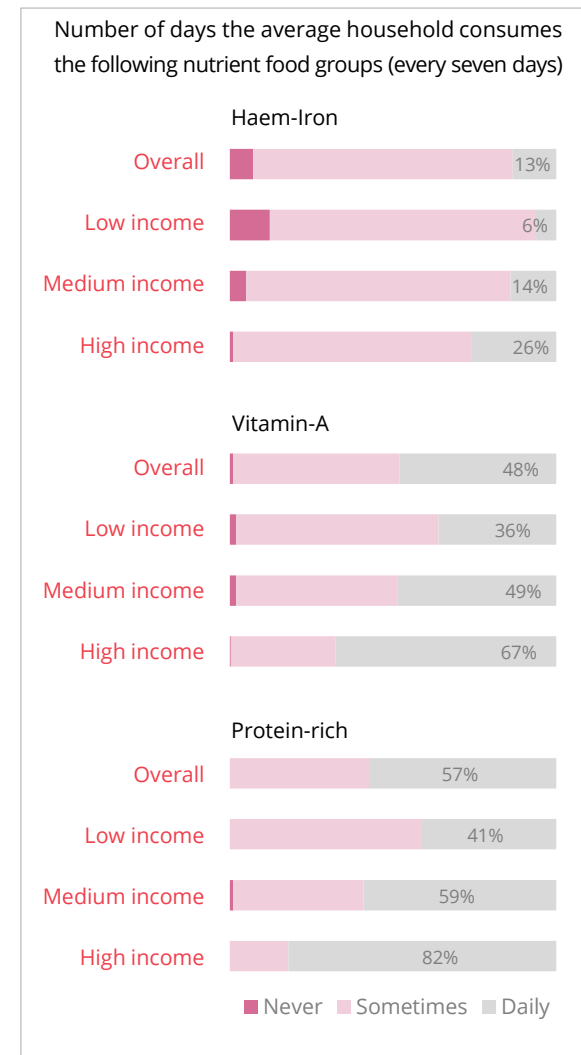
**The consumption of micronutrient-rich food decreased for all households compared to the last quarter, especially during Ramadan (April).**

Only 13 percent of households had iron-rich food in their regular diet. In contrast, only 6 percent of low-income households reported consuming foods from this group, although the quantity was not measured. Prominently, all the income group households consumed protein, fruits and vegetables, and sugar. All income groups had a massive protein and vitamin A-rich food consumption gap. The nutritional gaps in a recycle period, due to seasonal impact on employment and recurrent disaster impact on food access and availability, put the households in long-term threat to meet nutritional needs.

**FOOD CONSUMPTION (AUGUST)**



**FEBRUARY FOOD CONSUMPTION - NUTRITION (AUGUST)**



\* The "Food consumption score" (FCS) is a score calculated using the frequency of consumption of different food groups consumed by a household during the 7 days before the survey. There are standard weights for each of the food groups that comprise the food consumption score.



Higher reliance on coping strategies and vulnerability to withstand future shocks.

**An alarmingly increased number of households relied on negative livelihood coping strategies to withstand shocks.**

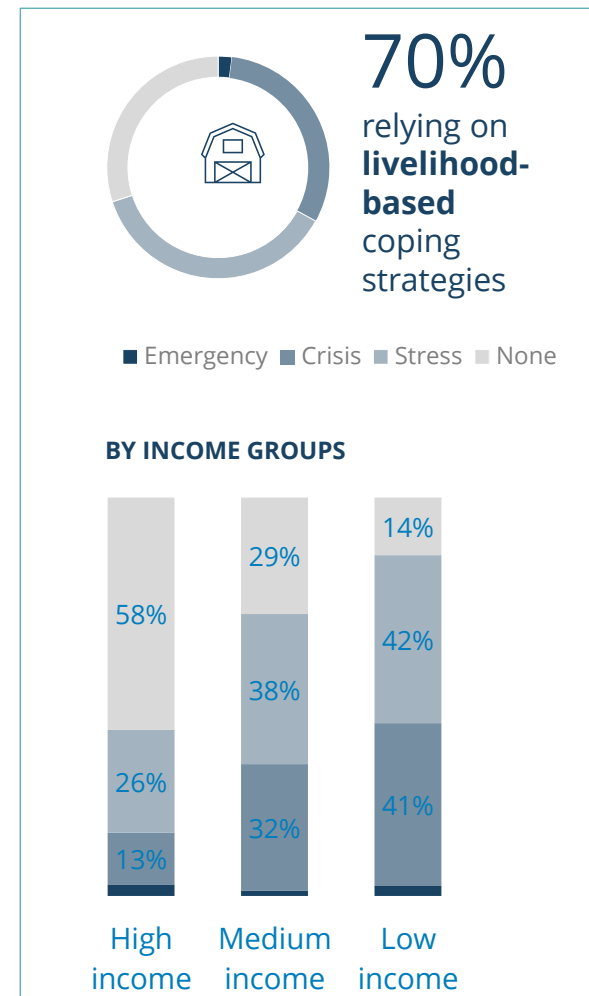
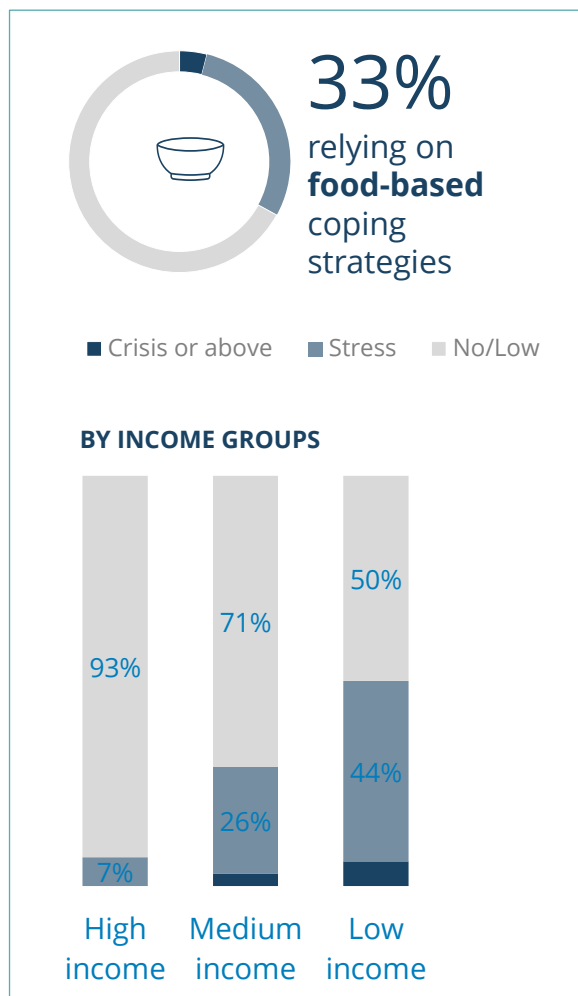
It is alarming that a significant percentage of households from high and middle-income groups households relied on emergency coping, including purchasing food on credit, selling productive assets lands, and spending savings. Negative coping has been observed for a long time, spiking in April and increasing until August. The households The impact of the lean season continued from March, and reliance on livelihood coping increased to 64 percent of households.

**A significantly high percentage of households in low-income groups relied on emergency coping.**

Many households (6%) struggled to meet the required diets and compromised by limiting portions or skipping meals by adults. It is alarming that many households are steadily on different food-based coping, which worsened in the monsoon season due to disaster hits.

**Income instability made a big difference in both food-based and livelihood-based coping strategies.**

Due to recurrent and multiple shocks during May-August, many households continued relying on different coping mechanisms, which followed a similar trend in the last year.



\* Reduced food-based coping strategies (rCSI) scores are used as a proxy variable for food insecurity. The rCSI is based on the frequency and severity of coping mechanisms for households reporting food consumption problems and assesses the stress level of households due to a food shortage. A high score indicates a higher stress level, and a lower score means that the household is less stressed.





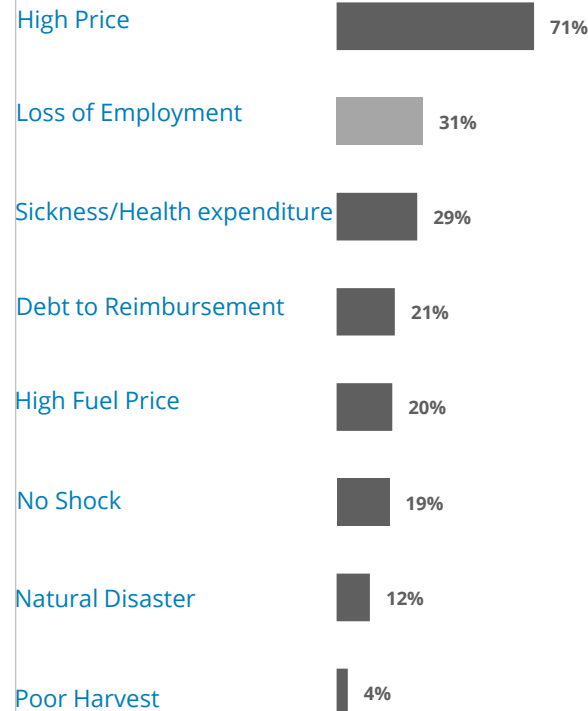
## Food inflation continues to be higher ( 9.76 %)

**Food inflation is steadily above the danger level, and high food prices have hit more than seven in ten households in the last six months.** In the domestic retail markets, month-on-month prices of essential food commodities like lentils, wheat, poultry, egg, green chili, sugar, and garlic were reduced officially. Unfortunately, households experience more price shocks. The global export import crisis impact on the wheat price remains 57 percent higher yearly. The non-food inflation rate decreased from 9.47 percent to 9.72 percent in March and April <sup>1</sup>. The most reported shocks after price hikes were loss of income or employment and health expenditures. Households faced the struggle to cope with sickness and health expenditure.



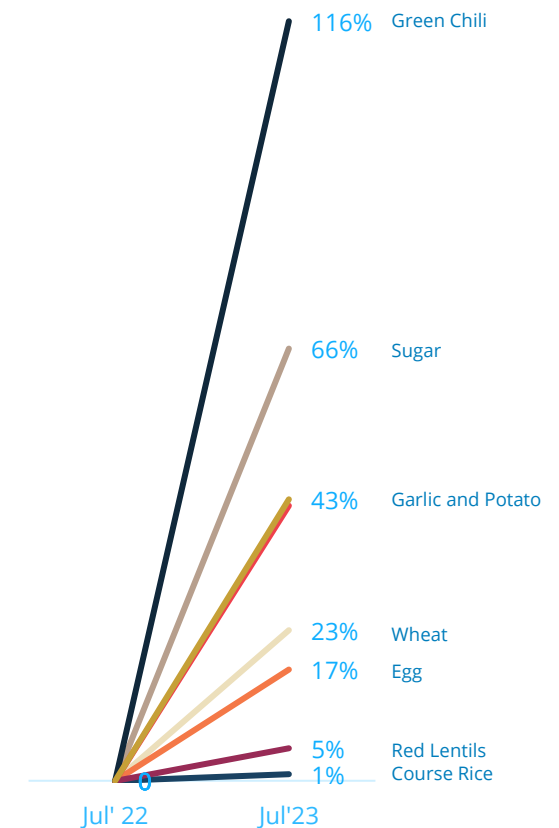
## High food prices stand out as the biggest shock

% HOUSEHOLDS AFFECTED BY SHOCKS



## Prices of commodities continued to increase

% PRICE INCREASE YEAR-ON-YEAR\*



<sup>1</sup> Consumer Price Index, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics April 2023. A CPI is an index to measure the monthly change in prices paid by consumers.

<sup>2</sup> November inflation rate was compared as the survey took place in the first week of December, and the households recall period was seven days to thirty days.

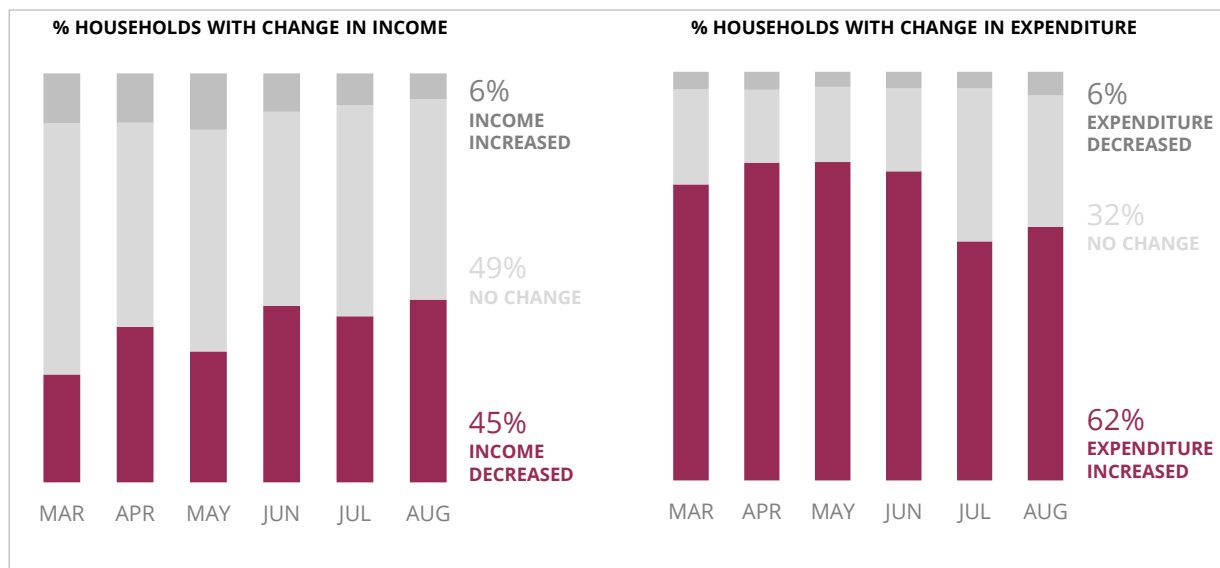


Loss of purchasing power due to high inflation and losses from natural disasters are incredibly costly for poor households.

**Close to six in ten poor households reported an expenditure increase during the monsoon season.** Most households reported expenditure increases in most divisions, especially for food, health, and education. On average, 31 percent of households reported loss of employment.

**Households reporting income loss remained high for the low-income households.** While expenditure increase was a common concern for all income groups households, the low-income group reported a loss of income. More than five in seven low-income households reported decreased income in April, which is very high.

Almost all the divisions reported higher average income loss, 30 to 40 percent households, between 20 and 50 percent decrease in income. **In the Chattogram division, 10 percent of households reported a drastic 50 percent decrease during recurrent disaster hit.** High prices and cost increases negatively impacted all employment sectors, and the low-income group, primarily dependent on agricultural activity and petty traders, was the hardest hit. The high and medium-income groups also suffered from income loss and expenditure increase.





## Background and Methodology

The remote food security monitoring system (mVAM) in Bangladesh was launched in July 2022 and collects data via telephone interviews from households across the country. Data was collected from 1,200 respondents across eight divisions since July; thus, the report is entirely based on these surveyed households. The data precision is +-8 percent, with a 95 percent confidence level at the divisional level. The mVAM survey was launched to provide near real-time analytics on food security and essential needs analysis across the country. It allows regular assessment of the impact of shocks, including the developing global food crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, floods and cold waves.

**Bangladesh's situation comes in the midst of a global food crisis** which has generated a wave of upheaval in markets and which risks exacerbating the situation even further. Globally, **More than 900,000 people worldwide are fighting to survive in famine-like conditions** in 2023. Learn more [here](#).

### Other Resources



#### Q3 MARKET MONITOR 2023

A regular summary of changes in the market, with a focus on recent developments



#### COUNTRY BRIEFS 2023

A monthly **overview** of WFP's activities in Bangladesh, including situational and operational updates



**Acknowledgments:**

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**World Food Programme**

Bangladesh

## Annex: Tables

Overall

Food Insecurity (rCARI)	MAY (%)	Food Insecurity (rCARI)	JUNE (%)	Food Insecurity (rCARI)	JULY (%)	Food Insecurity (rCARI)	AUGUST (%)
Food Secure	3	Food Secure	1	Food Secure	2	Food Secure	2
Marginally Food Secure	79	Marginally Food Secure	76	Marginally Food Secure	76	Marginally Food Secure	74
<b>Moderately to Severely Food Insecure</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Moderately to Severely Food Insecure</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Moderately to Severely Food Insecure</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Moderately to Severely Food Insecure</b>	<b>24</b>
Livelihood-based Coping Strategies		Livelihood-based Coping Strategies		Livelihood-based Coping Strategies		Livelihood-based Coping Strategies	
None	36.54	None	26.46	None	31.39	None	29.52
Stress	30.7	Stress	37.19	Stress	32.35	Stress	36.9
Crisis	31.65	Crisis	33.82	Crisis	33.55	Crisis	31.35
Emergency	1.1	Emergency	2.53	Emergency	2.72	Emergency	2.22
Food-based Coping Strategies		Food-based Coping Strategies		Food-based Coping Strategies		Food-based Coping Strategies	
No/Low	74.2	No/Low	65.7	No/Low	68.8	No/Low	67.2
Medium (Stress)	22.6	Medium	30.0	Medium	28.0	Medium	29.2
High (Crisis)	3.2	High	4.3	High	3.3	High	3.6
Food Consumption Group		Food Consumption Group		Food Consumption Group		Food Consumption Group	
Acceptable Food Consumption	77.11	Acceptable Food Consumption	71.86	Acceptable Food Consumption	69.89	Acceptable Food Consumption	69.84
Borderline Food Consumption	21.7	Borderline Food Consumption	27.07	Borderline Food Consumption	28.83	Borderline Food Consumption	29.13
Poor Food Consumption	1.18	Poor Food Consumption	1.07	Poor Food Consumption	1.28	Poor Food Consumption	1.03

## Annex: Tables

### AUGUST

	Income Group (%)			Sex of Head of Household (%)		Disability (%)	
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	FEMALE	MALE	YES	NO
<b>Food Insecurity (rCARI)</b>							
Food Secure	0.0	3.5	2.8	1.28	1.92	2.25	1.85
Marginally Food secure	52.8	87.8	94.0	62.82	75.18	67.42	74.93
<b>Moderately to Severely Food Insecure</b>	<b>47.2</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>22.89</b>	<b>30.34</b>	<b>23.22</b>
<b>Livelihood-based Coping Strategies</b>							
None	14.45	29.25	58.33	24.04	29.9	18.3	30.4
Stress	42.2	37.63	25.72	37.8	36.8	43.0	36.4
Crisis	40.66	31.83	13.04	34.2	31.2	34.4	31.1
Emergency	2.7	1.29	2.09	3.7	2.1	4.3	2.06
<b>Food-based Coping Strategies</b>							
No/Low	49.9	71.4	92.8	59.8	67.7	47.3	68.8
Medium (Stress)	43.9	28.8	7.3	36.6	28.7	45.2	27.9
High (Crisis)	6.2	2.8	0.0	3.7	3.6	7.5	3.3
<b>Food Consumption Group</b>							
Acceptable Food Consumption	54.53	75.05	89.86	58.5	70.6	60.2	70.6
Borderline Food Consumption	43.74	24.09	10.14	37.8	28.5	37.6	28.5
Poor Food Consumption	1.73	0.86	0	3.7	0.9	2.2	0.9

**World Food Programme**

Bangladesh