

Original Research Article

Challenges and Supports of Volunteers during Crisis Situation: Lessons Drawn from Lockdown during Covid-19 in Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

Aims: Due to the rapid global spread of the coronavirus outbreak, numerous governments have developed non-therapeutic preventive measures and mobilized volunteers to aid those impacted. Volunteers face significant challenges in Bangladesh, considering its status as a low-middle-income country with one of the highest population densities in the world. The objective of this study is to examine the challenges and support encountered by volunteers in crises like the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as explores the factors associated with these challenges.

Methodology: The study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to accomplish the research purpose. The qualitative research design comprises conducting five key informant interviews (KI) and one focus group discussion (FGD). Conversely, the quantitative design involves collecting 60 responses through a structured questionnaire. Furthermore, the qualitative research revealed that the training of volunteers, their attractions and maintenance, government and political variables, and self-esteem are the primary influences on the challenges and support experienced in volunteering during crises. Further research can be undertaken using a larger sample size, and comparing data across other countries can provide a more comprehensive knowledge of the obstacles and support systems related to volunteering jobs.

Result: The volunteers' perceptions during COVID-19 were taken into consideration for quantitative data in order to determine the outcome. Four of the five hypotheses were found to be true. These factors; volunteer training; volunteer recruiters and retainers, political and governmental difficulties, and volunteer self-esteem have a significant impact on volunteering. This study identified insufficient funding, inadequate coordination between volunteers and administrators, and a lack of training facilities as the main challenges encountered in volunteer work during crisis situations.

Conclusion: This study recommends inclusion of people from all strata as volunteers. In addition, volunteers need to be trained for better performance. Better governance and greater motivational efforts would ensure increased and sustained participation of volunteers. Creating awareness about the value of volunteers in society would ensure their self-esteem is established.

Keywords: Challenges; Volunteer Support; Volunteering; Crisis Situation; Covid-19

1. INTRODUCTION

During the extraordinary phenomenon of the crisis situation, the government generally takes comprehensive measures through engaging the entire public administrative apparatus as well as ensuring allocation of funds and economic stimulus packages [1]. However, given this unprecedented scenario, the government alone could not combat the crisis situation like a pandemic. Being a disaster-prone country, Bangladesh has a rich heritage of community involvement in dealing with natural calamities [2]. Local involvement has been the key aspect that enabled involvement of multifarious volunteers to engage in serving the nation; a similar scenario occurred since the outbreak of COVID-19 as well [3]. Nevertheless, these volunteers were confronted with multiple obstacles ranging from lack of funds to lack of cooperation and coordination from the local government bodies.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly triggered a significant surge in volunteering and community support efforts across the world [4]. Noticeable manifestations of this inundation of community essence within Bangladesh include the upswing of so-called mutual aid groups, volunteer-led initiatives where persons from specific areas work together to meet communal needs without the help of authorized bodies.

To protect the people of Bangladesh from pandemic Covid-19, which causes severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the GOB announced lockdown numerous times in different phases till August 11, 2021 [5]. During the lockdown a good number of spontaneous volunteers were working in line with the government initiative to support the populace. Moreover, the government is required to involve volunteers in both its management and operations, which underlines their dependency on the volunteers to some extent. To work dynamically towards retaining or keeping their volunteers should therefore be of great importance to society in general and the different government and non-govt. bodies in particular. Previous research suggests that a wide range of strategies could be used to keep volunteers on board, with an emphasis on intrinsic motivational elements [6]. However, there is a dearth of studies that address how challenges could be dealt with in practice.

Moreover, volunteering is generally beneficial for a volunteer's well-being [7]. In addition to the social engagement which typically occurs in paid labour, it can bring a sense of meaning and satisfaction as well as social interaction. Against this backdrop, this study has been proposed to find out the challenges they faced during the crisis situation and ways to solve these problems in order to reap the most out of the volunteer forces. The objectives of this study are outlined as: **To identify the challenges faced by volunteers during crisis situation like Covid-19; to identify the drivers that are connected to challenges and supports of volunteering jobs; to identify the ways to mitigate these challenges.**

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Volunteering is an activity where people sacrifice their time- whether individually or in groups - without cost for providing services to the community [7]. Volunteering is not only an individual engagement but also organized and managed by organizations and policymakers [8]. During the pandemic, a number of humanitarian people, volunteers and non-government organizations, including students, have come forward with aid for the rootless [9]. These philanthropic activities are being run both through individual and collective efforts. When the first case of COVID-19 was officially confirmed in Bangladesh on March 8, 2020; different youth organizations started making and distributing masks, hand-sanitizers, hand-washes, soaps as well as creating awareness among economically marginalized people. In the succeeding phases, as economic activities were gradually suspended, the need shifted to daily necessities. This resulted in the distribution of rice, pulses, oil, salt, sugar, biscuits and saline to the needy ones. Moreover, students of public health programs established hotlines to answer to public queries on COVID-19 [10].

Safety measures for the volunteers have emerged as another pressing issue. On that note, volunteers, too, are more vulnerable and susceptible to the COVID-19 infection and in most cases, they are inexperienced and untrained to respond to such situations. If they have to eat lunch at any eateries, they have to make sure that the food is hot and freshly prepared [11]. Volunteers who work to provide medical services as well as other livelihood and awareness campaigns need to be provided with enough motivational measures. Recognition and acknowledgement from the government of their sacrifices and efforts could play a significant role [12]. Both individual volunteers as well as volunteer groups complained about lack of direction and coordination from the state agencies. Citizens' efforts should be complementary to what the government is doing as these are not sufficient but these youth efforts are an eye opener and encouragement for others as well as for the state and the government [10].

In recent years, volunteering is gaining community and political interest [8]. Moreover, interest has grown regarding the study of volunteer and volunteering, and the number of publications which are keen on volunteering has increased rapidly [13]. There is a common debate in most of the countries on how to motivate and sustain volunteering in the society which is substantiated with a good number of studies [8]. Therefore, it is a mixture of individual and group activities. Guidi (2021) identified four types of ideal volunteering traditions in societies [14]. In active membership tradition, volunteers are involved in established organizations which are nonprofit and are structured by legislation; founders shape the core value and mission whereas current members shape the instruments and activities [15],[16]. On the other hand, in the case of direct volunteering tradition individuals perform their volunteering with organizational dis-intermediation [17]. In such cases, volunteer activities are not regulated by law or the government legislation, [14].

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On the contrary, program-based volunteering tradition is firmly structured and organized where organizations plan, design and manage the activities of volunteering [18]. Organize-It-Yourself is the name of the final volunteering tradition. It consists of citizens' voluntary activities in response to an emerging problem that is not being adequately addressed by institutions, the market, or existing civil society organizations. Voluntary action is highly unofficial and instinctive, but not unorganized. People are using soft and temporary instruments to organize themselves in order to achieve a specific outcome, which do not often entail (and even sometimes explicitly refuse) formal affiliation [14]. Volunteers are usually more active during the national or local crises and they work spontaneously being motivated to engage in community involvement activities that were evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.1 Crisis Situation (Covid-19) and Volunteering

It was evident that new approaches were required to help health services, professionals, and volunteer organizations during the initial COVID-19 lockdown which was implemented in early 2020 [19],[20]. To assist elderly in surviving a lockdown, a number of volunteer and charitable programs were created [21]. In reaction to the crisis, grassroots self-help initiatives have arisen, cooperation networks have grown, and non-governmental organizations have expanded their purview to address

new needs [22]. Covid-19 caused significant damage to the professional and personal lives of billions of people around the world, forcing governments to cope with a new reality marked by rising mortality rates, lockdowns, social distancing, social isolation, and tele-working [23]. Governments had to confront numerous challenges in order to deal with the virus that included the implementation of new initiatives as well as providing assistance to vulnerable individuals and communities [24],[25]. This was next to impossible for the governments across the world given their resource constraints. Therefore, it became a dire need for the government to engage volunteers to work together with govt. staff with the aim to augment public services as well as to protect public health [26]. There are different factors that influence the volunteers' supports and challenges during the crisis situation such as motivation, training, government, political issues etc.

2.1.1 The Relationship between Volunteer Training and Volunteering

It should not be taken for granted that volunteers are readily capable [27]. Wilson (1983) noted that there are seven key steps in the training process for volunteers. They include establishing goals, evaluating learning, creating program content, creating the learning environment, obtaining teaching materials, and providing training. Using these ideas can enhance the likelihood of successful volunteer training. Volunteers should be encouraged to stay involved if there are opportunities to inform and train them [28]. Training programs that involve hands-on activities or allow for personal observation tend to retain volunteers better than those that don't. Organizations that prepare their volunteers have a number of advantages, including a better public image, reduced risks and liabilities, and the ability to deliver high-quality services [29]. Training opportunities must be carefully organized and delivered [28]. Lessons should be adaptable to a wide range of learners, as well as accommodating to different learning styles [30]. Training helps volunteers to actively manage the crisis situation properly.

H₁: Volunteer training has a positive relationship with volunteering jobs.

2.1.2 The Relationship between Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers and Volunteering

Recently, academics have been debating the best ways to manage volunteers [31],[32]. Volunteer management practices and volunteer behavior have recently been linked by a slew of authors. As a result of these metamorphoses, volunteer work is now becoming a legitimate career option [32]. Researchers contend that despite volunteerism being an unpaid service to the less fortunate, since the beginning of the "International Year of the Volunteer" in 2001, organizations and individuals involved in volunteerism have been perceived as professional organizations and professionals, respectively [32]. Past studies have attempted to unravel volunteer management practice in various contexts, including volunteer typology [33], volunteer environment [34], volunteer behaviour [35], and organizational contexts [32],[36],[37].

H₂: Attractions and maintainers of volunteers have positive relationships with volunteering jobs.

2.1.3 The Relationship between Motivation and Volunteering

Studies that have compared the intentions of new and long-term volunteers to see if there are any differences between the two are sparse. Extant literature reveals that participants with prior volunteer experience in sports were substantially more satisfied with their job assignment than first time volunteers at a sporting event [38]. First time volunteers at sports events, on the other hand, were more likely to say they planned to continue working at sporting and community activities in the future [38]. Elstad (2003), on the other hand, discovered that the more time volunteers spent working at a huge Norwegian music festival, the more likely they were to return [39]. For the two hypotheses that volunteer experience would be positively connected with the decision to volunteer and the time spent volunteering, Hallmann (2015) found no evidence to support either hypothesis [40]. A similar study by Bachman et al. (2017) concluded that volunteer experience had no influence on the relationships between volunteer motivation and satisfaction, intention to return, or satisfaction and intention to volunteer again. Prior volunteer experience appears to have an impact on motivation [41]. According to Georgiadis et al. (2006), new volunteers may place less value on altruistic motivations than on the event itself [42]. It has been shown that when people gain volunteer experience, they become less selfish and more altruistic, [43]. As a result, motivation in volunteering comes from prior experiences. The following hypothesis has been developed based on the above theme.

H₃: Motivation has a positive relationship with volunteering jobs.

2.1.4 The Relationship between Governance & Political Issues and Volunteering

Governments encouraged an active civil society, which then volunteered to help district governments become more effective. This created a fruitful cyclical relationship [44]. In this regard, the International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP) is dedicated to enhancing the rule of law around the world through various means. Volunteers with ISLP give free legal services to help enhance the rule of law and preserve human rights by working with retired attorneys who are skilled and experienced in the field. Past projects include, for example, assisting Ukraine's Public Defender Office in its establishment and offering guidance on India's amended plea-bargaining rules. Volunteers generally work one-on-one with citizens, but the end result is usually stronger institutions and systems. As a result of their collaboration with the Cambodian Arbitration Council Foundation (ACF), Australian Volunteers for International Development (AVID) helped resolve labour conflicts in Cambodia. Volunteers frequently labour in environments where corrupt activities are the rule rather than the exception. Volunteers often lament the difficulty of enforcing anti-corruption procedures with partner organizations and within government institutions due to normative disparities. Maintaining transparency in the budget process in the face of widespread corruption was both eye-opening and exhausting [45].

H₄: Governance and political issues have a positive relationship with volunteering jobs.

2.1.5 The Relationship between Self-Esteem and Volunteering

Self-esteem is a motivation for working applicable to any human being [46]. Working as a volunteer or joining a youth organization, can serve as a way to get involved in society while also supporting your mental health. NGO activities have also been found to increase teenage psychological well-being by encouraging the development of cooperation and responsibility skills. People's zeal to improve their

society and their rights is ignited when they participate in community action, and this promotes social consciousness and increases their desire to exercise their power for the betterment of their communities and their own rights [47].

H₅: Volunteer self-esteem has a positive relationship with volunteering jobs.

2.2 Volunteering Challenges and Supports

The implication of volunteering to societies and individuals has been broadly recognized [48]. According to volunteer management research, volunteer organizations face a number of difficulties [49]. Management challenges which are not widely reported are included in this category. In addition, volunteers confront a variety of challenges as a result of poor volunteer management practices, which exacerbates the problem. Consequently, the problem of volunteer management has two sides, namely the obstacles faced by volunteer management in organizations and the bad practice of management contributing to problems faced by voluntary workers. When it comes to managing volunteers, finding and recruiting volunteers who are available during working hours is one of the most difficult challenges [49]. Other challenges include financial issues associated with supporting volunteers as well as a lack of adequate number of volunteers as a result of recruitment issues. Additional challenges include a lack of human resources and time to train volunteers. In building a set of volunteer management best practices, it is critical to address these concerns [49]. In addition, extant literature reports motivation [50], satisfaction [51], empowerment [52], good management practice [33], proper utilization of volunteers [37], and recognition [36] as challenges to volunteer management.

3 METHODOLOGY

The research design can be divided into qualitative, quantitative or combined techniques [53]. This study applied the hybrid research design which included both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data, however, was used to complement arguments derived from qualitative data. Qualitative research employs analyses and interpretation of various philosophical assumptions, research techniques, data collection methodologies [53]. This study used two qualitative data collection tools—including one (1) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and five (5) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with semi questionnaires—to collect data and information about the role of volunteers and their challenges during lockdown due to covid-19. Focus group discussions were conducted with the people who are involved in volunteering. One FGD was conducted with 7 (seven) participants. This study used standard FGD protocol and guidelines.

On the other hand, the quantitative portion of the study was conducted with a structured questionnaire survey that included selected volunteers (both formal and informal). The item scales were chosen from extant literature. It is mainly used to validate and cross check the insight which had been drawn from the qualitative study. Moreover, convenience sampling was followed for the quantitative study. Population is the total number of volunteers who worked as volunteers during the Covid-19. 60 respondents gave their responses to the structure's questionnaire constructed based on an extensive review of the literature. The quantitative study allowed data triangulation [54] and confirmation of the findings from the qualitative part.

This survey included 24 questions considering five independent variables: Volunteers' training, Attractions & Maintain of volunteers, Motivation, Governance and Political Issues, Self-esteem and one dependent variable- Challenges and Support of Volunteering. The survey was provided using a hybrid method. In the end, the regression analysis method was employed to determine the influence of drivers or factors on challenges and supports of volunteering jobs. Moreover, cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of data.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Qualitative Study:

Key Informant Interview (KII) and focus group discussion (FGD) were used to know the challenges and supports of volunteering during the crisis moments like covid-19.

4.1.1 Challenges and support faced by volunteers

Lack of funds is one of the major challenges that volunteers had to cope with during the covid-19 lockdown. Although there are a good number of non-profit organizations and NGOs working to fight covid-19, most of the organizations are working in the urban areas. Lack of presence of these organizations in the rural areas is a key challenge for volunteers. A key informant shared that lack of motivation is a crucial challenge for volunteering. Although most of the volunteers are self-motivated, it is not adequate enough to attract people in volunteering. Subsequently, lack of safety measures emerged as a key obstacle in the path of volunteering during the pandemic induced lockdown. Several respondents in the KII endorsed the fact that they did not receive adequate safety measures. Volunteers had reported encountering mental distress during lock down. Respondents attributed their lack of access to the most vulnerable people during the pandemic due to the fact that they did not have the required support services to enable them to reach out to this section of the society. Moreover, remoteness of their place of living also contributed to the lack of transport facilities in accessing them. Lack of coordination among volunteers has been termed by respondents as another major challenge that volunteers had to deal with during the lockdown. Though social media is abundant with information; most of it is not reliable as opined by the respondents. According to the respondents, there is some evidence that some individuals wanted help from volunteers but in reality, they did not need any help. This is largely due to the inability of the volunteers to verify the authenticity of those who seek help. Some respondents mentioned that volunteer training is necessary due to the fact that it enables volunteers to learn about the affected communities, about their role and how to perform their tasks effectively and efficiently, although, some volunteers do receive training from the government organizations mostly about safety measures, respondents labelled them as quite inadequate. Most of the volunteers have reported that they work not for any tangible benefit but rather for self-satisfaction and due to their sense of responsibility to do something for the society or community. Although Govt. and other organizations have already taken some initiatives for recognizing their work at national level, no such recognition is seen at local level where they spend most of their time.

4.2 Quantitative Study

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents are:

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	16	26.7
	Male	44	73.3
Age	20 – 30	57	95
	31 – 40	2	3.3
	41 – 50	1	1.7
Occupation	Business	1	1.7
	Entrepreneur	1	1.7
	Service	7	11.7
	Student	51	85.0
Education	High School/Lower	4	6.7
	Graduation	41	68.3
	Post-Graduation	15	25.0

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Comment [s5]: Add " in years"

4.2.1 Reliability Analysis

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's coefficient (α) varied from 0.978 to 0.982 for each investigation dimension (usually 0.5

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha
Volunteers Training (VT)	.978
Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers (AMV)	.978
Volunteers Motivation (VM)	.979
Governance and Political Issues (GPI)	.978
Self-Esteem (SE)	.982
Challenges and Supports (CAS)	.981

and higher is acceptable), indicating the internal consistency of each dimension (factor) of volunteering jobs [55], [56]. Hence, the dependent variable is challenges and supports, and the five independent variables are Volunteers Training, Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers, Motivation, Governance and Political Issues, and Self-Esteem. All five independent variables exhibited Cronbach's Alpha value of larger than 0.9, which is considered excellent. For the Challenges and Supports of Volunteer (dependent variable), its Cronbach's Alpha falls under the good category, which is 0.981. Cronbach's alpha score in this experiment was larger than 0.9, indicating that the survey utilized in this research had good internal reliability (Table 2).

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics

According to Table 3, the perception of respondents on challenges and support for volunteers which have a mean score of 3.60. Volunteers training and attraction and maintenance of volunteers have least perception of 3.53. Both volunteers' motivation and governance and political issues consist of moderate mean scores of 3.55 and 3.57 respectively. Among the five dependent variables, Self-

Esteem has the highest mean score 3.60. Therefore, it is clearly understandable that self-esteem has the largest effect regarding the challenges and support of volunteers during covid-19 in Bangladesh.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of variables

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
VT	2	5	3.53	.999	.998
AMV	2	5	3.53	1.02	1.03
VM	2	5	3.55	.946	.895
GPI	2	5	3.57	.927	.859
SE	2	5	3.60	.960	.921
CAS	2	5	3.60	.960	.921

Note: VT: Volunteers Training; AMV: Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers; VM: Volunteers Motivation; GPI Governance and Political Issues; SE: Self-Esteem; CAS: Challenges and Supports

Comment [s6]: Add total number of respondent N=????

4.3 Regression Analysis

Table 4 indicates that the model's coefficient R is 94%, which is quite close to 100%. The study's five independent variables—volunteer training, volunteer attractiveness and retention, motivation, governance and political issues, and self-esteem—take into account their cumulative effects to explain it. It makes sense in light of the findings that there is a positive correlation between the five independent factors and the difficulties and resources faced by Bangladeshi volunteers. Other factors that are not investigated and included in this model will describe the remaining 6%.

Furthermore, the coefficient of multiple determinants, or R square, illustrates the total variance of the dependent variable that can be explained by all of the independent variables. The R square in the above table is 0.899, indicating that volunteer training, volunteer recruitment and retention, volunteer motivation, governance and political difficulties, and volunteer self-esteem account for 89.9% of the variation in challenges and supports. The rest, 10.1%, remains untested by this model.

Table 4: Model Summary of Regression Source: (Survey output)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.948 ^a	.899	.890	.319

a. Predictors: (Constant), VT: Volunteers Training; AMV: Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers; VM: Volunteers Motivation; GPI Governance and Political Issues; SE: Self-Esteem; CAS: Challenges and Supports

4.3.1 ANOVA Test Analysis

Based on the table 5, the F-value is an indicated value of 96.06. It defines that there is a significance between the dependent variable (Challenges and Supports) and independent variables (Volunteers Training, Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers, Volunteers Motivation, Governance and Political issues and Self Esteem) with a p-value (0.000)<0.01. Thus, the five independent variables are able to predict the changes in Challenges and Supports of volunteers in Bangladesh during Covid-19.

Table 5: ANOVA Test Analysis Source (Survey output)

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of	Df	Mean	F	Sig.

	Squares		Square		
Regression	48.902	5	9.780	96.068	.000 ^b
Residual	5.498	54	.102		
Total	54.400	59			

a. *Dependent Variable: Challenges and Supports*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), VT: Volunteers Training; AMV: Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers; VM: Volunteers Motivation; GPI Governance and Political Issues; SE: Self-Esteem; CAS: Challenges and Supports*

From the Table 6 Volunteers Training, Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers, Governance and Political issues and Self Esteem has a positive significant impact on Challenges and Supports for volunteers. Only the volunteer motivation does not impact significantly to the dependent variable Challenges and Supports for volunteers.

Table 6: Regression Analysis Source: (Survey output)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
(Constant)	.154	.171		.900	.372
VT	.778	.146	.810	5.320	.000
AMV	.387	.168	.410	2.301	.025
VM	.106	.164	.104	.644	.522
GPI	.394	.167	.380	2.357	.022
SE	.079	.106	.079	.746	.455

Note: VT: Volunteers Training; AMV: Attraction and Maintenance of Volunteers; VM: Volunteers Motivation; GPI Governance and Political Issues; SE: Self-Esteem; CAS: Challenges and Supports

4.3.1.1 Decision on hypothesis

H₁: *Volunteer training has a positive relationship with volunteering jobs.*

The p-value of the volunteers' training is 0.000, which is below the statistical significance threshold (α) of 0.05. Given that the value is below 0.05, the hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, it is assumed that there is a significant correlation between providing training for volunteers and carrying out volunteer work.

H₂: *Attractions and maintainers of volunteers have positive relationships with volunteering jobs.*

The attractions and maintainer of volunteers have a P-value of 0.025, which is below the threshold for statistical significance (α) of 0.05. Given that the value is below 0.05, the hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, it is assumed that there is a significant correlation between the appeal of attractions and the recruitment and retention of volunteers for volunteer work.

H₃: *Motivation has a positive relationship with volunteering jobs.*

The P-value for the impact of motivation is 0.522, which above the threshold for statistical significance (α) of 0.05. This suggests that the hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it is hypothesized that there is no substantial correlation between motivation and engagement in volunteer work. Due to their high level of self-motivation, most volunteers are not easily swayed by external factors.

H₄: Governance and political issues have a positive relationship with volunteering jobs.

The P-value for governance and political concerns is 0.022, which is below the threshold of statistical significance (α) of 0.05. This suggests that the hypothesis is not rejected. Consequently, there is a prevailing belief that good governance and political matters are closely linked to the provision of volunteer positions.

H₅: Volunteer self-esteem has a positive relationship with volunteering jobs.

The p-value for the notion of self-esteem of participants is 0.045, which is below the threshold of statistical significance (α) of 0.05. This suggests that the hypothesis being proposed should not be rejected. Consequently, it is assumed that self-esteem has a substantial impact on volunteering positions.

5 DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

The goal of the study is to pinpoint the variables that affect volunteers' struggles and sources of volunteering during times of crisis. The volunteers' perceptions during COVID-19 were taken into consideration for quantitative data in order to determine the outcome. Four of the five hypotheses were found to be true. These factors—volunteer training; volunteer recruiters and retainers, political and governmental difficulties, and volunteer self-esteem—have a significant impact on volunteering. Training helps volunteers to take necessary actions during the crisis situation. Therefore, in order to do voluntary work during a crisis, a certain level of training is required. Furthermore, recruiting and retaining volunteers is crucial when it comes to volunteering services. Volunteers become extremely dedicated to carrying out their work when they observe that caring authorities look after and appropriately retain volunteers. Additionally, political concerns and government assistance encourage volunteers to take on volunteer work during times of crisis. Lastly, while volunteering in a crisis situation is an unpaid profession, self-esteem also plays a role in it.

Additionally, the research's qualitative component has highlighted a few challenges. One of the biggest issues volunteers faced during the COVID-19 lockdown was a lack of funding. The absence of safety precautions subsequently became apparent as a major barrier to volunteering during the pandemic-induced lockdown. Respondents also identified the primary challenge that volunteers faced during the lockdown as being their lack of coordination with one another. The absence of training facilities is yet another crucial issue at a time of crisis.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

COVID-19 has brought into the fore plenty of pertinent issues that governments and societies across the globe should consider. This study recommends inclusion of people from all strata as volunteers. In addition, volunteers need to be trained for better performance. Better governance and greater motivational efforts would ensure increased and sustained participation of volunteers. Creating awareness about the value of volunteers in society would ensure their self-esteem is established. Despite the numerous challenges identified in this study, it is indeed possible to overcome them with pre-emptive measures by the govt. which would guarantee better volunteer response in future. Government and international organizations should increase funding facilities to motivate volunteers.

Comment [s7]: Add references that support your discussion. Also add diverse cultural and religious background that plays a pivotal role in volunteering and coping challenges

Finally, concern ministry should organize seminars, workshops etc. to create safety awareness among the volunteers and citizens.

7 LIMITATION AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

Each and every research work has its own limitations and it is an inevitable matter. In this research, the researcher relied on questionnaires as the tool for data collection and it is well known that there is no guarantee of accuracy of the answers. The sample size is 60 for the quantitative part, which is relatively small compared to the number of people involved in volunteering in Bangladesh. Further studies can take a more representative sample. In addition, sometimes key informants may be unable to provide appropriate information due to secrecy or confidentiality issues. Future studies can work on a larger sample to further strengthen these findings. Moreover, future studies may also consider external disturbances that hamper the task of the volunteers.

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