

Report of the Baseline Survey of Potential Erosion and Flood Affected Areas of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project

April, 1997

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report on the baseline survey of the households within the area demarcated by the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMBA). This area spreads over 12 km to the north and 10 km to the south of the bridge. This area covers both charland and mainland. In the mainland, the survey area covers half a kilometer inland from the riverbankline on both sides of the river. The survey covers households in 44 chars and 132 villages which spread over 13 unions and 5 thanas under the two districts, namely Tangail and Sirajganj.

The objectives of the survey were to identify and register all households owning property or residing or working within the defined boundaries and to provide baseline data which may be used later for undertaking subsequent detailed socio-economic survey. The survey includes such household information as household composition, housestructures, main occupation of the household heads, land owned and occupied, present settlement of the households and the loss suffered by the households due to flood and erosion in 1996.

JMBA issued identity cards to those households whose lands were acquired in 1992 and 1993 for the bridge. About 7% of the households covered by this survey are holders of these identity cards. The percentage of households with ID cards is 9.3% for Tangail and 4.25% for Sirajganj. The total number of households under this survey is 24,035. These households have a population of 129,031 and the average size of these households is 5.4. Of these households 6.9% are female headed.

The survey covered 44 chars of different age and size. The age (habitation period) of these chars varies from 4 to 65 years. These chars have a number of community facilities such as mosque, madrasah, primary schools etc. In certain unions of Sirajganj and Tangail districts, there is a concentration of handloom weaving factories. The survey area has a total of 416 factories with a total of 3875 workers under them. The value of land per decimal in these chars as reported by the local people varies from Tk.30 to 1300 in the case of agricultural land and from Tk. 30 to 1200 in the case of homestead land.

The average size of households under the survey is 5.4 for Tangail, 5.3 for Sirajganj and 5.1 for erosion affected areas. The percentage of household members within the age group of 15-59 is 50.3 in the survey area while this percentage is 49.24 at the national level (1991 census). The population pyramid of the survey area as a whole is almost symmetrical with that of the national level. The unmarried population of the households under the survey constitutes 55.7 and the married 39.9. The difference between these percentages for the charland and that for the mainland is small.

Cultivation is the principal source of income of the highest percentage of household heads under the survey. But in the mainland of Sirajganj handloom weaving is the principal source of income of the highest percentage of household heads. But day labour is the principal occupation for the largest percentage of households affected by erosion. In the case of these erosion affected areas the percentage of household heads with cultivation as the principal source of income decreased from 56.0 in their original locations to 12.5 in their present locations and with daylabour as the principal occupation increased from 14.7 to about 37.0 and with other occupations from 11.5 to 29.1.

The households in the survey area have on an average 2.4 housestructures. But the floor space of most of these houses appeared to be very meagre and the construction materials used in most of the structures also very poor in quality. In the erosion affected areas other than the spill channel area, the percentage of households with only one housestructure was 10.7 in their original locations, which has increased to 41.2 in their present locations. In almost half (48.4%) of the present housestructures, jutestick is used in the wall. The housestructures using thatching-grass in the wall constitute 26.6% and using tin 19.4%. In contrast to this situation of construction materials in the walls, the roofs of 68% of the housestructures are covered with tin while 30% are covered with thatching grass and only 2% with other materials.

The percentage of housestructures with age of less than one year is 36.6 in the spill channel area and 40.4 in the case of the households in other areas affected by erosion. The households from the erosion affected areas (other than the spill channel area) living at present in the houses constructed on government land constitute 52.3%. The percentage of households living on the land of other persons is 47.4 in the case of spill channel area and 29.1 in the case of the households from the erosion affected other areas.

An attempt was made to know from the respondents (household heads) whether they consider their habitation in their present locations as permanent or temporary. About 80% of the respondents consider their habitation in their present locations as permanent while only 20% consider their present habitation as temporary. But in the case of the respondents from the erosion affected areas (other than the spill channel area), 82.3% of the household heads consider the habitation in their present locations as temporary. Because of heavy erosion along the riverbankline on the western bank (Sirajganj), 32.1% of the respondents of the mainland consider their habitation in the present locations as temporary. For 79.2% of the households in the case of spill channel area, erosion of riverbank is the reason for settlement in their present places while erosion of char is the reason for present settlement for 92.0% of the households in the case of erosion affected other areas. About 69% of the households of the spill channel area and more than 97.0% of the households from the erosion affected areas (other than the spill channel area), have been living 1 to 2 years in their present location. More than 94% of the

households from the erosion affected areas (other than the spill channel area) had been living for more than 2 years in the places of their original habitation. Erosion has displaced them from the places of their original habitation in recent time.

Most of the households living in the area under survey are in different land relations. About 57% of these households are owner-occupier and 56.7% of the households are not owner but occupier of land while 17.5% of the households are sharecropper. These percentages of owner-occupier households from the erosion affected other areas in their original places were 62, not owner but occupier of land 48.2 and sharecropper 29.3. But because of loss of their land, their present occupation pattern has undergone much change. At present only for 12.5% households from these areas cultivation is the principal occupation, for 37% day labour is the major source of income while the remaining 50% earn their living from other sources.

The households in different parts of the survey area suffered losses of different types and degree due to flood and erosion in 1996. Of the total households about 25% lost housestructures, 32.6% cultivable land, 48% lost crop and 37.1% other assets. These percentages are the highest in the case of the households of the erosion affected areas other than the spill channel areas. The percentages of households adversely affected by the loss of house-structures is 79.6, by the loss of cultivable land 59.3, loss of crop 72.4 and loss of other assets 57.3 in these erosion affected areas. The average quantum of land lost by these erosion affected households as reported by the respondents is also the largest (282.4 dec.) compared to the households of other areas. Loss of land due to erosion is almost a common feature of the survey area. There was loss of land in the spill-channel area even before 1995 and in the erosion affected other areas before 1996. But the percentage of households who lost land due to erosion sharply increased in the spill channel area from 0.4 in the year 1994 to 46.1 in 1995 and in the erosion affected other areas from 26.3 in 1995 to 64.6 in 1996.