

Submerged into the Deep

The plight and challenges aftermath of flood and waterlogging disasters in the Southwest region of Bangladesh



UTTARAN

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Written by:

**Fatima Halima Ahmed
Ric G. Ontal**

Edited by:

**Shahidul Islam
Reshad Md. Ekram Ali Kochi**

Cover Design:

**Fatima Halima Ahmed
Abu Musa**

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UTTARAN

Head Office: Tala, Satkhira, Bangladesh,
Phone # +88 0471-64006 Ext. 283, Mobile: 0171-182344
Dhaka Liaison Office: 42 Satmasjid Road (3rd Floor),
Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh,
Phone # +88 02 9122302, Mobile # 0171-828305
e-mail: uttaran@bdonline.com

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Foreword

Southwest region of Bangladesh is different from the rest of the country in terms of geo-morphological and ecological consideration. Southern part of this region is laying within the coastal zone that is prone to disasters like storms surges, cyclones, floods, waterlogging etc. Besides, the region is facing the hurdles of climate change along with the on-going effects of the large high-handed development interventions like Coastal Embankment Projects, which considered as the root causes of making the lives of the people vulnerable from one disaster to another and drive them into penury. People have to face the so called development whether they like or not, which in effect, shaped their working patterns and lifestyle.

The very situation posed a concrete challenge among key actors in the region. The government as well as NGOs takes serious effort to ensure the safety of the people both from man made and natural hazards. At the same time, there is need to mobilize other actors in the region like private sectors, NGOs, civil society and the local communities to undertake collective efforts in disaster preparedness and management which ultimately reduce vulnerabilities and impacts by the disasters. However, the challenge of disasters should be tackled with short-term, mid-term as well as long-term perspectives such as development of sustainable disaster management policy and adaptation strategies to effectively mitigate the impact of the disasters.

Hope that this document will help you to understand the complexity of the disastrous landscapes of the region and underlying challenges. Thus, I would like to thank Fatima Halima Ahmed and Ric G. Ontal for their tireless and uncomplaining efforts to produce this document. Grateful to Reshad Md Ekram Ali Kochi for editing and additional insights, to Shahidullah Osmani for compiling relevant reports and literatures, to Hasam Ali Fakir for facilitating the survey at upazila level and to Abdul Momen Chowdhury, Shambhu Choudhury, Md. Abul Hossain and Abu Musa for taking part in preparation. Thanks to the countless marooned people who are witness and endure the cruelty of disasters and who continue to give us inspiration to move forward.



Shahidul Islam
Director
UTTARAN

Introduction

The ecological and geological situation of Southwestern part of Bangladesh is unique in many ways. Southwest is the part of inactive delta of large Himalayan Rivers and located just behind the mangrove forest Sunderban and Bay of Bengal. The large portion of the region is coastal wetland formed by the rivers flowing to the sea and as brackish waterways of Sunderban.

Since the Southwest region is located in the coastal zone, it possesses a fragile ecosystem and is exposed to a number of calamities like cyclones, floods, tidal surges, repeated waterlogging, and land erosion, degradation etc that shaped the lives and livelihood patterns of people. Their condition becomes precarious and the cycle of poverty is entrenched. The region has suffered from the unplanned and indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources such as the conversion of mangrove ecosystem into shrimp ponds that seriously damage the ecosystem. The coastal embankment project that was designed without incorporating some considerations for drainage requirement has further made the situation worst day-by-day. This in itself upshot to completely blocked the free flow of tidal discharge into the basins and grave congestions among the drainage in the coast which viewed to be the root cause of the catastrophic level of disaster of the region.

Now, the Southwest region is severely experiencing with chronic waterlogging, continued increase of siltation, saline intrusion, and ecosystem degradation due to continued ecological and climatic changes. The people especially the poor have often borne the brunt of these changes. The

region is regularly visited with disasters such as cyclone, flood and cyclic waterlogging that makes the plight of the people submerged into the deep of unfathomable hardship and miseries.

However, this posed a big challenge among key actors of the region to adopt enabling strategies and undertake 'paradigm shift' towards effective and sustainable disaster management to reduce severe vulnerability and impact as aftermath of disasters.

Revisiting the Advent of the Mammoth Disaster

The people who are the inhabitant of the Kapotakho basin especially from lower portion of Jhicargacha upazila (Jessore district) to Tala upazila (Satkhira district) have been experiencing flood during the rainy season for the last five years. From Jhicargacha to Tala, both banks of the



river are quite high and never had been they encountered such kind of flood before unprecedented flood in 2000. That flood massively ruined and desolated 135,000 families comprising more than 700,000 individuals. The marooned people lost their paddy fields, homesteads, and livelihood. Satkhira experienced flood once again in July 2002. More than 5,000 kutchra houses had been completely damaged and at least 400 shrimp farms were washed away. The loss was roughly estimated at about 20 million taka.¹

On the other hand, in the 1995 the general mass of Satkhira and Jessore had organized a movement called 'Kapatakho Bachao or Save Kapatakho'. The NGOs and other members of the society as well as all the political parties are also involved with this movement for the demand to re-excavate the Kapotakho river. The government of Bangladesh, especially Water Resources Ministry sat with them and finally government considered the people's demand and engaged some dredger machine to re-excavate Kapotakho river. It happened in last August 2003. Nevertheless, floodwater is still present for lack of river maintenance. Furthermore, the government does not provide rehabilitation or any long-term livelihood support to the flood and waterlogged victims of the mentioned areas, which made to further worsen their miserable conditions.

Evolution and Nature of the Problems

During the 1960s, the then government of East Pakistan implemented a Coastal Embankment Project (CEP) along around 1556 Km, as well as made 137 polders and 282 sluice gates in the districts of Khulna, Satkhira and the southern

¹ Living in the Coast: Problems, Opportunities and Challenges, published by PDO-ICZMP, June 2004

part of Jessore district. The then CEP aimed to protect arable land from saline water and farming of high yielding variety rice to allow an exhaustive green revolution in the coastal region of the country. The project was funded by a number of donor agencies. The major part of the project was completed in 1973 up to 1984, farmers were benefited by the project. However, the project design had failed to comprehend the ecological and socio-economical consequences of polder construction. In fact, after 15 years of project completion, CEP has brought destruction of the land as well as economic activities of the people of the Southwest coastal region. In particular, the project had left nothing but waterlogging, downfall in biological productivity and change particularly fish production, disappearance of biological resources and continuing pressure on the ecosystem. More serious consequences of the project begun to unearth in the mid-80s as the upper portion of the tidal wetland especially beel Dakatia area was experiencing waterlogging. Almost all upper ends of the estuaries began to silt up. In the pre-embankment period, the high tides used to deposit silts in the tidal plain during the months of January to June when people used to breach the temporary embankments build around the tidal flat for the period July to December. In the post-embankment period, as sufficient tidal water could not enter into the tidal plain, the silts got rapid deposition at the upper ends of the estuary and gradually the river-beds began to rise. Inside the polders, the wetlands subsided due to subsidence and non-deposition of silt and gradually took the shape of lakes. Thousand hectares of land have become waterlogged. The embankment decreased the depth and the area of tidal prism. Salinity of the soil has increased due to capillary action and vast agricultural lands have lost fertility. Many rivers are drying up due to

increasing silt on their beds during the dry months, only a very small area of land can be cultivated since huge area is under water.²

Undoubtedly, CEP's immediate impact had resulted in bumper crop production in the initial 10-15 years. Thereafter, the inhabitants have started to face severe ecological problems due structural interventions in the region. This can be manifested in the massive shrimp culture proliferation. Moreover, significant number of marginal farmers lost their land, day laborers lost their job, some have migrated to nearby places, increasing child labor and exploitation, and increasing incidents of sexual harassment among the poor women are happening due to extensive shrimp farming.

The Southwest region of Bangladesh was marked as flood-free zone until the time it experienced the deadliest flood on September 2000. As revisit, the mammoth flood had started when a heavy rainfall of over 400mm in the Southwestern border districts of Bangladesh, from Meherpur to Satkhira, and the adjacent cross border districts of Murshidabad, Nadia and 24 Parganas in West Bengal, India. In just three days, 800mm of rain was recorded in the Rajmahal hills around the southward bend of Ganges. This also coincided with the rainfall of over 1700mm in the Chhota Nagpur and adjacent hilly areas where four rivers emptied into the Bhagirathi-Hooghly. It may be noted that the Bhagirathi-Hooghly was at that time already filled with the waters of the Ganges which aftermath a massive loss of life and property in Bihar, and had flooded in large areas in the districts of Chapai Nawabgang and Rajshahi in northern Bangladesh.³

2 People Took Initiatives for Changing Policy: A case on people's movement for coastal wetland conservation by Shahidul Islam, Uttaran Director

3. After the deluge: An ADAB-Khulna Survey on Flood-2000, Satkhira

In particular, since then, the region has been experiencing flood in the Kobodak and the Betna basins. These two major in-country rivers function as the major escape route for the huge water volume in several districts in the upstream to the Bay of Bengal. Moreover, 2 major rivers bordering India and Bangladesh, the Ichhamati and the Sonai, occasionally additional floodwaters in Bangladesh territory and further aggravate the flood situation in the Southwest region of Bangladesh. Therefore, the Southwest region is now no exception to the flood-prone northern and northeast region of the country.

Again in September, 2004 heavy downpour flooded huge areas in the Southwest part of Bangladesh as well as the adjoining region of India. This caused massive flood both in Bangladesh and India. Southwestern region's flood can be attributed to the following causal factors such as incessant heavy downpour; increased tide height in the rivers; inflow of floodwater from Indian Territory; and loss of drainage capacity of rivers in the region.⁴

Incessant heavy downpour

Incessant heavy downpour in Southwest region of Bangladesh, West Bengal and Bihar of India caused flood. For this reason there is obstacle of drainage of excess floodwater through the tidal river and in many cases embankments are breached. For example, the Kapotakho River has lost its navigational capacity because of rapid siltation in its bed. Normally the excess water flow of Meherpur, Kushtia, Jessore and part of Jhinidaha use Kapotakho and Betna River as drainage channel.

⁴ Based on the Flood Assessment Report of Satkhira and Jessore Districts conducted by Oxfam GB on 12-15 October, 2004

Increased tide height in the rivers

The level of high tide of the sea is raised because of spring tides and existence of deep low pressure in the sea. Because of breach of embankment along the Kobodak river, the village of Chargram and Srimantakati under Tala of Satkhira district, village Kurikahunia and its surrounding under Assasuni upazila were inundated by flood.

Inflow of flood water from Indian territory

The major reason for flood in Southwestern region in Bangladesh was the inflow of floodwater from adjoining Border States of India. The Government of India released water from reservoir to reduce water caused by the flood. The release of the excess water inundated the border areas of West Bengal as well as the Southwest region of Bangladesh.

Loss of drainage capacity of rivers in the region

The major river of this region is Kapotakho. The water flow in Meherpur, Chuadanga, Jhinaidah and part of Jessore district reach the sea through Kapotakho. Because of coastal embankment, the tidal wetland has experienced severe environmental impairments in this region. For example, the riverbed of Kapotakho has been raised because of loss of navigation capacity. It should be noted from Bakra of Jhikargacha, Keshabpur of Jessore and Tala upazila under Satkhira district. The Kapotakho River has lost its navigation capacity. Because of lack of drainage channels, Monirampur, Kalaroa, Keshabpur and Tala upazilas of Kapotakho basin, are inundated by floodwater.

Based on the present situation of Kapotakho river, can be divided into three major parts.

1. Dead Part

From its off take part of greater Kushtia district to Jhapa of Monirampur of Greater Jessore district, the Kapotakho river is now considered as 'Dead River'; but very significant portion of it is remain as drainage channel of excess rain water. It is weeded in many places.

2. Silted Part

From Jhapa of Monirampur up to Sagardari of Keshabpur the river has been silted by tidal silts and in some places, the drainage channel has completely disappeared. As a result, waterlogging of vast area is taken place.

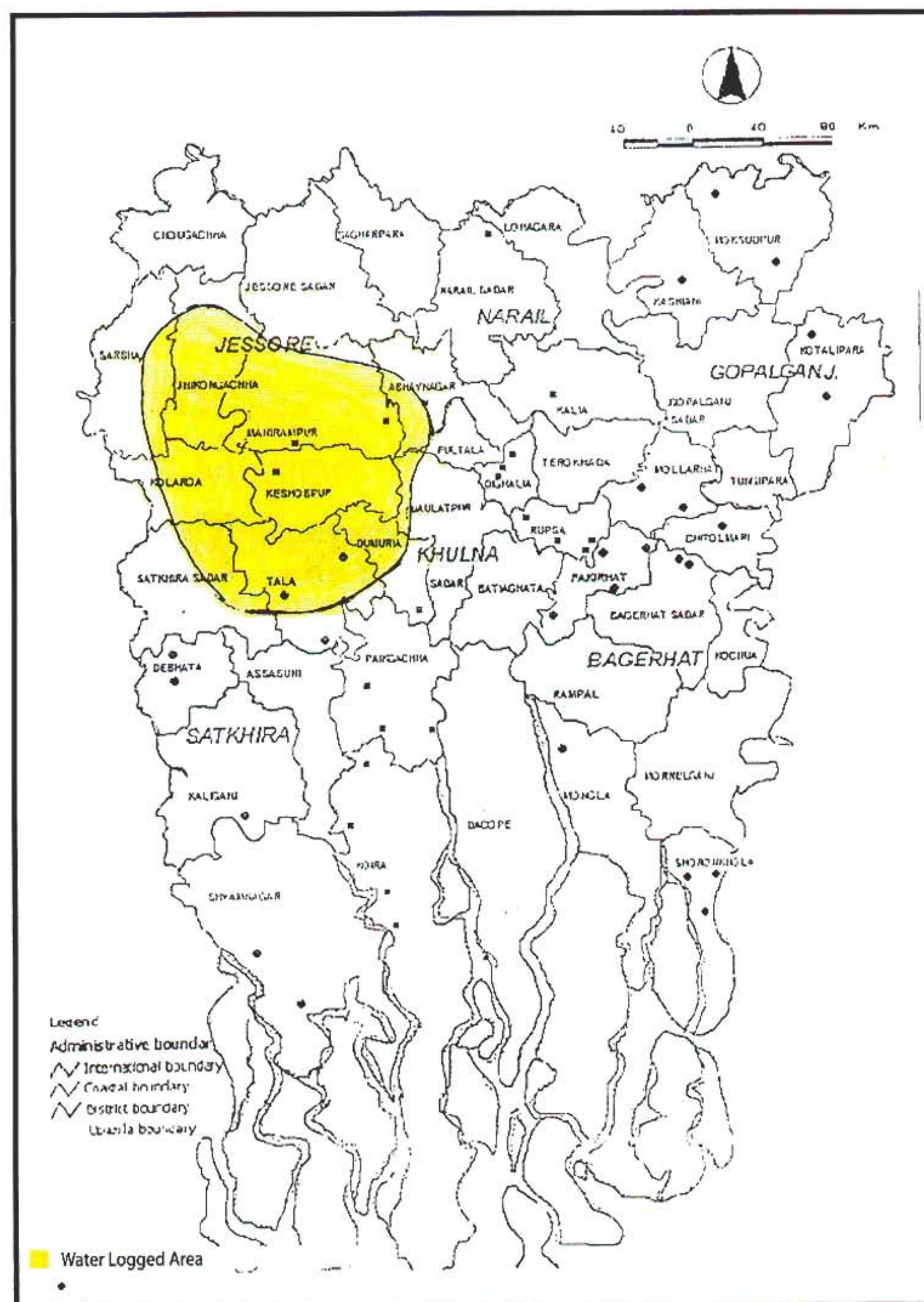
3. Rapidly Silting Part

Although from the lower part of Sagardari, the river has the cycle of tide and ebbs - it is being silted very fast. Particularly, tidal silts are filling up the dead end of Kapotakho river. According to local boatmen, at some places the riverbed is being raised from two to four feet. This situation resulted to major environmental impairment in the Southwestern region of Bangladesh.

In fact, the environmental impairment of the Ganges Basin started in the 16th century. Mainly it happened because of two reasons: The course of the Ganges was changed and the human intervention into nature. Before 16th century, the major water flows of Ganges run through Bhagirothi which divided into eight types of flow, it met the sea over the 24 Porogona and Khulna.

Basically, Jessore, Khulna, Kushtia, 24 Porogona, Murshidabad, Krisnonagar, Faridpur and Barisal were formed by the alluvial soil from the flow of the Ganges and

the soil was very fertile. In the 16th century, the Ganges changed its course from south to east and the above districts, which were dependent upon the flow of Ganges faced shortage of sweet water. At this backdrop, the tidal pressure had increased over Khulna, 24 Porogona and southern part of Jessore and salinity level had increased at the same time, which resulted to severe disruption in agriculture in this region. At the same time, because of unlawful activities of mob and pirates in these areas, the region became almost no-man's-land. On the other



hand, in the 19th century, the then British government filled up the source of "Mathabhanga" river to reduce the severity of "Mathabhanga" river (a major distributary of the Ganges). For this reason, the flow of sweet water in Kushtia, Jessore and Khulna considerably reduced.

Earlier, the Bhairab River served as the main source of sweet water for Jessore, Khulna and western part of Kushtia. "Jolangi" flowed over Murshidabad and two distributary of "Mathabhanga" River, which flowed over Kushtia district met together, and consequently Bhairab River was born. In the mid-19th century, the source of "Mathabhanga" became closed and the section of Jolangi River, which met the

distributory of "Mathabhanga" River, was also closed. As a result, the flow of sweet water into Bhairab river became completely disrupted and the areas dependent upon Bhairab river for sweet water were severely affected.

Now, those areas located on the bank of the Kapotakho river such as Jhikargacha, Keshabpur, Monirampur, Dumuria, Satkhira Sadar, Tala and Kalaroa under Jessore-Khulna-Satkhira districts are considered as flood prone and waterlogged area.

Vulnerabilities: Fate or Curse?

People of the Southwest region are not only vulnerable to flood and waterlogging but also with other hazards like cyclone and storms surge, salinity intrusion, river and coastal erosion, and water and air pollution. Besides, they are vulnerable to facing another havoc in their lives that is the advent of climate change in the region. People are now taking the 'heavy burden' as it induced changes in salinity and waterlogging condition⁵. This in fact expected to increase the intensity of cyclones, resulting in the penetration of storm surges further inland, causing higher damages. Thus possible impacts are: change in water levels and induced inundation and waterlogging; increased salinity in ground and surface water, and corresponding impact on soil salinity; increased coastal morphological dynamics (subsidence, erosion and accretion); and increased incidence of natural hazards⁶. This will tantamount to serious impact to the day-to-day life and livelihood of the people in this area. The poor are particularly affected more by these catastrophes, as they are less able to protect themselves.

5 RVCC Care Bangladesh Vulnerability Report (Draft) in the Southwestern Region of Bangladesh, December 2002

6 Living to the Coast: Problems, Opportunities and Challenges by PDO-IC2MP, June 2004

In 2004 flood, Satkhira, Jessore and Khulna were the hardest hit districts. Flood had affected 7 upazilas In Satkhira district, 6 upazilas in Jessore district and 1 upazila in Khulna district. The above-mentioned upazilas were comprised of 156 unions/pourasava wards, out of these number, 88 unions (56%) were seriously affected by the flood. The flood had left a tremendous extent of damage: 145, 121 household affected; 26, 543 housed damaged totally; 42,481 houses damaged partially; 185,610 acres of aman crop damaged; and 39,085 acres of vegetables damaged. In addition, based on the Fact Finding Mission conducted by IDO (a local NGO) in flood affected areas in 11 unions of Satkhira and Jessore districts; estimated damages were 2,375 shrimp farm/ponds washed out. 147 institutions, 2,545 tube wells, 49 Km of roads, 16 bazaar and Tk. 1,195,000 worth of forest resources were damaged by the flood.

During the flood season, thousands have fled in an exodus to safer and high-level grounds while others sought refuge to their relatives, relief camps, schools, roads and neighboring villages and embankments. Most of the inhabitants in the Southwest region living are in mud-type houses are completely damaged or destroyed by the flood. The families, whose economic situation is comparatively better, can reconstruct their houses. However, the female headed or hard-core poor families cannot start to reconstruct their houses immediately after flood, due to shortage of money.

The flood-affected people are enduring poor health, hygiene, water and sanitation condition that resulted to make them susceptible to acquire water-borne diseases due to lack of access to safe drinking water and latrine. Significant number of people especially among women,

children and elderly had suffered malnutrition due to absence and/or lack of [ideal] food, which further prolonged by the delay of relief food assistance from concerned agencies. In various flood shelters, many people are drinking water from the tube well even contaminated by arsenic that posed to long-term health vulnerabilities to the flood affected people.

In times of disaster, women and children are the most vulnerable and suffer twofold than their male and adult



counterpart due to endemic stereotyping and discrimination. They are often neglected to get access in the designated shelters or camps. Women have been forced to compromise their privacy by having no separate compartment for them, in many cases, using open toilets. Using and same contaminated pond water which often causes various kind of skin diseases, jung and skin infections, since the pond are also used for urination and attached to nearby latrines. The flood made to stagnant the already

polluted water in the ponds, which become a breeding haven of mosquitoes that signaled another threat for the outbreak of malaria and other related diseases. Women have no provision for personal needs like sanitary napkins during menstrual period and extra cloths that compelled women to continue wearing the same cloth for days, for this reason they cannot take bath for long days, which again affected their fragile health condition.

Poor health and unhygienic environment are essential contributory factors to making the flood-affected people and community at risk to the widespread of water-borne diseases and even death.

As aftermath of disaster, the people are becoming vulnerable to economic displacement and social misery due to serious damage of their sources of livelihood and agriculture that resulted to further food insecurity. In the flood-affected areas, the paddy fields are inundated. Practically, there are not survived crops due to severity of the flood and waterlogging. The sharecroppers and marginalized farmers could not start to cultivate the Rabi crops and Boro rice in raised land due to lack or absence of money in hand to buy seeds and fertilizers. Some poor people are forced to sell their domestic animals, trees and even land at nominal price to unscrupulous traders and opportunist individuals who are taking advantage of their situation. While others by no other means have had resorted to loans bearing with high interest rates. The unemployment situation is very high in those affected communities. People have been forced to migrate to other places to earn a living. Some families are being dislocated and disintegrated because fathers and mothers go to different places for work. While their children are forced to work as servants to other houses are common scenarios in the area.

Disruptions of schooling are taken place elsewhere in these flooded and waterlogged communities. Schools were inundated and some were seriously damaged. Maximum children of hardcore poor families have dropped out from school to seek 'petty' employment to aid family needs. The health conditions of the children have deteriorated due to lack of access for food. Among the children, increased dropouts, poor performance, irregular participation are common.

Thus during the floods, the people are in acute need of food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, cloths, temporary shelters, etc to sustain quality life.

Actions: Sustaining Lives and Rebuilding Communities

There are remarkable efforts from all key actors in the Southwest region, in particular, the government, NGOs, donors and among others. They actively partake in the emergency relief and rehabilitation works of the flood and waterlogged affected people and communities towards sustaining quality of life and rebuilding of shattered communities.

UTTARAN: Commitment in Action

UTTARAN has been implementing a number of interventions and projects as its commitment to address the needs (at pre, during and post disasters) of the people and communities in the Southwest region of Bangladesh for the past 19 years. Uttaran has also been providing both emergency relief and rehabilitation interventions to the distress people. Emergency relief provision includes food and non-food items, baby foods, installation of sanitary latrines, installation tube wells, provide sanitary kits and sharee for women, reed mats and floor mats, plastic sheets,



health care supports, raising of schools playgrounds and clean up drive for affected community ponds. While rehabilitation works include low cost housing, house repair, livestock provision, poultry bird rearing, soft loans, distribution of seeds and fertilizers, latrine installation support, distribution of winter protection goods, cash for work, and supplementary feeding program for 5-10 years old school children and as well to pregnant and lactating mothers.

UTTARAN has been able to conduct a series of trainings on disaster preparedness and management that was participated by its selected primary organization officers and members. The main objective of the training is to increase their capacity and awareness at reducing the impact of disasters and preparing themselves in times of emergency situation.

These interventions were made possible through the generous support of its donor-partners. More or less Taka 124,452,901.05, winter cloths, 192 MT wheat, 5055.75 MT biscuit were used in both emergency relief and rehabilitation works, solely of Uttaran. That benefited approximately 433,460 family victims of the last natural disasters. This alone does not include the large share of the government, other NGOs and donor communities that have been working in the flood affected and waterlogged communities. Summary details are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Summary of UTTARAN Disaster Initiatives of Last Three Major Disasters

Name of Project	Year	Value (Taka)	Short Description
Emergency Relief Support for the Flood Victims of Southwestern Region of Bangladesh	11/2004 to 01/ 2006	21,844,000	Implemented to 3900 families in Tala, Kalaroa under Satkhira District and Dumuria under Khulna District which component includes: Food, water and sanitation, Health, Baby wares, Sharee, Lungee, Fooder, provide seed support to 8000, 390 families got house support, 390 families got latrine support, 228 ring well were installed. The project is implemented in partnership with Oxfam GB.
Emergency Relief Support for the Flood Victims of Madaripur District	08/2004 to 10/2004	1,758,055	Implemented to 3450 families in 6 unions of Shibchar upazila under Madaripur district. The 6 unions are Shannashir Char, Charjanajat, B a n d a r k h o l a , Matbarerechar, Kathalbaria, Boira Tala and Shibchar municipality. The project components include: Food package (12.5 kg rice, 3 kg lintel/dal, 500 grms soybean oil, and 100tk cash for fuel, wood soil, chillies etc.), sanitation and tubewell raising. The project was implemented in partnership with Trociare Ireland.
Emergency Relief Support for the Flood Victims of Southwestern region of Bangladesh, 2004	09/2004 to 11/2004	980,997	Implemented to Tala, Kolaroa upazila under Satkhira district and Keshabpur and Monirampur upazila under Jessore district. Provided food package (rice - 10 kg, pulse - 2 kg., potato -

Name of Project	Year	Value (Taka)	Short Description
			2 kg. , oil - 0.50 litre, cash support - Tk. 100) to 1390 families, tube well raising - 34, installation of latrine - 122. The project was implemented in partnership with ActionAid Bangladesh.
Emergency Relief Support for the Flood Victims of Southwestern Region of Bangladesh, 2004	09/2004 to 11/2004	425,479.50	Implemented at Tala Upazila which component includes Food package to 925 families and in some cases medicine support was also provided. Food support contains rice - 10 kg., pulse - 2 kg., oil - 0.5 litre , potato - 2 kg.)The project was implemented in partnership with Misereor Germany.
Winter cloths Relief Operation	28/01/2004 to 29/01/2004	Winter cloths	Uttaran has been provided 1000 winter cloths package to 1000 families. Each package contains 2 blanket, 1 jacket, 1 cap. Wenter cloths distributed in Debhata, Tala and Kalaroa upazilla. Beside, in Kolaroa 1 additional item that was pollythene sheet was included in the winter package. The project was implemented in partnership with Oxfam GB.
A Post Flood Rehabilitation to Support People's Struggle for Survival	06/2002 to 05/2003	971,831.80	On 17 October 2001, the embankment beside the Kapatak breached out due to heavy tidal surge and flood 17 villages of 2 unions of Assasuni and Shyamnagar upazila under Satkhira district. Then Uttaran implemented a rehabilitation project in 12 severely affected villages in Shyamnagar and 5 villages in Assasuni under Satkhira district.

Name of Project	Year	Value (Taka)	Short Description
			The project components include low-cost housing support for 70 families, installation of 4 deep tube well and emergency employment creation for 4020 person/days. The project was implemented in partnership with Misereor Germany.
Emergency Feeding Support for the Pregnant Mothers and Children	01/2002 to 09/2002	1,884,367 and 1254.78 metric ton biscuit	Implemented at Kolaroa, Debhata and Satkhira Sadar. The feeding support was made of high-energy biscuits for the 5,280 flood affected pregnant mothers and 57,988 children. The project was implemented in partnership with World Food Programme.
Emergency School Feeding Programme	08/2001 to 12/ 2004	9,435,433 and 3800.97 metric ton biscuit	Implemented at Kolaroa, Debhata and Satkhira Sadar. The feeding support was made of high-energy biscuits for the 78,200 flood-affected students. The project was implemented in partnership with World Food Programme
Food Support in Shyamnagar and Assasuni Upazila	01/01/2002 to 30/04/2002	192 MT wheat	On 17 October 2001, the embankment beside the Kapatak breached out due to heavy tidal surge and flood 17 villages of 2 unions of Assasuni and Shyamnagar upazila under Satkhira district. Then World Food Programme distributed 30 kg. wheat to 1600 flood affected families (each month) through Uttaran. This support was continued for 4 months. The project was implemented in partnership with World Food Programme

Name of Project	Year	Value (Taka)	Short Description
Flood Relief Project 2000	2000	2,293,200	Implemented at Kalaroa which component includes both dry foods and cooked foods. The project was implemented in partnership with Oxfam GB.
Flood Rehabilitation Project 2000	2000/2001	7796555	Implemented at Kolaroa upazila. Uttaran provided 1200 houses with latrine, winter cloths for children and old people, cash for work for 1 month. The project was implemented in partnership with Oxfam GB.
Flood Rehabilitation Project 2000	2000/2001	3093638	Implemented at Satkhira Sadar upazila. Uttaran provided 500 houses with latrine, winter cloths for children and old people, cash for work for 1 month. The project was implemented in partnership with Oxfam GB.
Post Flood Rehabilitation Project 2000	01/01/2001 to 31/12/2001	839000	Implemented at Satkhira Sadar, Debhata and Kalaroa upazila of Satkhira district which component includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reconstruction of 21 NFPE and IPEP schools. - 13 Reflect circles materials. - Provide education materials to 630 students The project was implemented in partnership with EDM Bangladesh
Post Flood Rehabilitation Project 2000	01/01/2001 to 31/12/2001	1000980	Implemented at Debhata upazila of Satkhira district which component includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - House reconstruction of 134 flood affected families.

Name of Project	Year	Value (Taka)	Short Description
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poultry birds rearing support to 134 families. - Seeds support to 134 families. - Fishing material support to 134 families <p>The project was implemented in partnership with CIDA.</p>
Bangladesh Southwest Flood Response 2000	02/10/2000 to 25/11/2000	7,522,986	<p>Implemented at 5 flood-affected upazilas namely Satkhira sadar, Kalaroa, Debhata, Assasuni and Tala under Satkhira district. The relief works include 40,000 meals for 40,000 people in 76 camps for 15 days, latrines, 400 tube wells, plastic sheet for 10630 families, 20000 families got the bleacting powder, supported 3015 cattle. The project was implemented in partnership with ActionAid Bangladesh.</p>
Emergency Rehabilitation Project 2000	01/01/2001 to 31/12/2001	7,297,000	<p>Implemented at Tala, Debhata, Satkhira Sadar and Kalaroa upazila of Satkhira district which component includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5000 school going children and adolescent boys and girls got education materials and meal - 97 primary and high schools were repaired. <p>The project was implemented in partnership with ActionAid Bangladesh</p>
A Post Flood Rehabilitation Project to Support People's Struggle for Survivals	07/2001 to 09/2002	3,057,375.75	<p>mplemented at Debhata upazila of Satkhira district which component includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing construction support to 200 flood

Name of Project	Year	Value (Taka)	Short Description
			<p>affected families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Livestock rearing support to 268 affected families - poultry birds rearing support to 219 families - soft loan support to 300 flood affected families <p>The project was implemented in partnership with Trocaire Ireland.</p>
A Post Flood Rehabilitation Project to Support People's Struggle for Survivals	07/2001 to 06/2003	4,274,900	<p>Implemented at Tala and Debhata upazila of Satkhira district which component includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing construction support to 335 flood affected families <p>The project was implemented in partnership with ICCO Netherlands.</p>
Post Flood Winter Relief Project	01/01/2001 to 29/03/2001	17,180,900	<p>Implemented in 26,990 families at 8 unions of Kalaroa, 3 unions of Tala, 7 unions of Sadar, 2 unions of Debhata and 1 union of Assasuni under Satkhira district. The relief works include 20,000 blankets, 25,000 sharees, 20,000 Mosquito nets, 20,000 mats and 25,411 shawls/sweaters. The project was implemented in partnership with DFID.</p>
Bangladesh Southwest Flood Response 2000	03/10/2000 to 12/10/2000	9,070,774	<p>Implemented at 5 flood-affected upazilas namely Satkhira sadar, Kalaroa, Debhata, Assasuni and Tala under Satkhira district. The relief works include 16000 package food (1 and 2.5 kg. rice, 4 kg. pulse, 1 litre oil and 1 kg. salt), 700 sanitary latrines, 175 tube wells, medical support to 20500 people, 8 tons of plastic</p>

Name of Project	Year	Value (Taka)	Short Description
			sheet for 12000 families, and baby food for 5000 babies. The project was implemented in partnership with DFID.
Bangladesh Southwest Flood Response 2000	15/10/2000 to 31/12/2000	23,725,429	Implemented at 5 flood-affected upazilas namely Satkhira sadar, Kalaroa, Debhata, Assasuni and Tala under Satkhira district. The relief works include 50,000 meals for 50,000 people in 103 camps for 15 days, 20,000 packaged food (12.5 kg rice, 3 kg pulse, 0.5 litre oil and 0.5 kg salt) for 20,000 families, 1203 latrines, 400 tube wells, 20 tons plastic sheet for roofing for 13,673 families, baby food for 8,900 babies, hygiene materials and sharee for 5,993 women, 7000 reed mats for 7,000 families, 20,000 blankets for 20,000 families, and medical support for 6500 people. The project was implemented in partnership with DFID.

Government initiatives

UTTARAN has carried out a survey to most vulnerable and disaster prone upazilas in the region namely Satkhira Sadar, Tala and Kalaroa of Satkhira district; Monirampur, Keshabpur and Jhicargacha of Jessore district; and Dumuria of Khulna district respectively. The survey showed that upazila authorities have been taking the vital role to respond the needs of the people and community affected by the disaster like floods, waterlogging, cyclone, etc. Specifically, concrete structures at upazila and union level are organized namely Upazila Disaster Management Committee and Union Disaster Management Committee. These two level committees are comprised of the following members:

*** Disaster Management Committee at Upazila Level**

1. UNO	Chairman
2. All UP Chairmen	Member
3. All Upazila Level Government Officers	Member
4. Women Representative	Member
5. Upazila Cooperative Society Representative	Member
6. Red Crescent Representative	Member
7. NGO Representative	Member
8. Cyclone Preparedness Committee	Member
9. PIO	Member-Secretary
10. Local MP	Advisor

*** Disaster Management Committee at Union Level**

1. UP Chairman	Chairman
2. All UP Male and Female Members	Member
3. Representative from School Teachers	Member
4. All UP Staffs	Member
5. Female Representative	Member
6. Cyclone Preparedness Committee	Member
7. Red Crescent Representative	Member
8. NGO Representative	Member
9. UP Secretary	Member-Secretary

All surveyed upazilas have organized the above-mentioned Committee at upazila level. Only Kalaroa, Monirampur, and Keshabpur have existing Committee at the Union Level. However, it was mentioned that the active participation of the civil society, elite groups and local individuals are necessary to effectively deliver the work during and post disaster.

The organized Committee in upazila and union level is responsible to undertake the following roles:

- # Organize meeting for immediate decision on disaster response.
- # Transportation of victims in designated safe places/camps.
- # Information collection/disaster situation assessment including estimates of loss and damage.
- # Forward assessment report to concerned government authority for immediate assistance.
- # Establishment of shelter in highland for the flood and

waterlog affected families.

- # Emergency relief distribution to affected areas or in designated camps.
- # Secure and smooth distribution of goods and materials received locally and from the government.
- # Ensure safety and security of the people.

The Committee conducts meetings regularly with a frequency of 4-7 times and even 15 times (in some upazila) at maximum, which often held during disaster period. In addition to formal meetings, informal meetings are also held to discuss other significant issues concerning disasters. The Committee resolved to take all possible decisions in the meetings and adopt enabling strategies to implement the plan that they have developed. Decisions are taken in 'participatory and democratic manner' through exchanges of views and ideas, and mutually agreed to take common actions or steps such as:

1. Identification of the locality affected by the disaster.

2. Establishment of communication.

3. Execution of survey and list preparation.

4. Transportation and evacuation

of the affected peoples in designated places/camps such as schools and highlands.

5. Distribution of dry foods during emergency and covering the minimum food requirement from the existing resources.

6. Arrangement of safe drinking water and sanitation.

7. organization of medical teams including first-aid medical assistance.

8. Information dissemination of important issues to all concerned UP chairmen in the affected communities.



Besides, the Committee is coordinating other concerned agencies in the district and government through telephone calls, letter, and facsimile. Even at times directly forwarded to the district and national authorities with attached first hand report through proper channel.

The Committee ensures the involvement of the NGOs working in the area through participation in Committee meetings, active involvement in the shelter-camps management, assessment of medical requirements and medicines distribution. NGOs are also helping in problems and needs assessment, documentation and preparation of victim's list, distribution of emergency relief package during pre as well as post disaster period through rehabilitation interventions. NGOs participation in the Committee is realized through collaboration and complementation as per their existing or mobilized resources and capability as well. NGOs take direct initiative for the emergency relief that is not covered by any agency including rehabilitation works and other post disaster related activities. Although, there have been incident of duplication and/or 'support concentration' in some areas due to lack of coordination among service providers. Nevertheless, this GO-NGOs relationship is viewed as weak and not sustain due to lack of mechanisms to bring together all actors in the area and diminishing coordination from both sides - the government (Upazila) and NGOs.

The survey conducted by UTTARAN has identified the 'hot spots' for flood and waterlogged disasters as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Flood and Waterlogging Hot Spots

Sl. No.	Upazila	Affected Area/Union Parishads (UP)
1	Satkhira Sadar	Balli, Labsha, Jaudangan, Brammorajpur and Municipal
2	Tala	Dhandia, Nagarghata, Sarulia, Khalishkhali and Kumira
3	Kalaroa	Deara, Joynager, Jugikhali, Jalalabad, Koila, Municipality, Karalkata, Halatala
4	Monirampur	Not mentioned but affected in 2000, 2003 & 2004
5	Keshabpur	Not mentioned but affected in 2000, 2003 & 2004
6	Jhicargacha	Bakra, Panisher, Nirbashkhola, Shimulia and Municipality
7	Dumuria	Not mentioned but affected in 2000, 2003 & 2004

In times of disaster, the Upazila Nirbahi Office through the Committee responds to the needs of the affected people and communities varies from one upazila to another as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Disaster Response (Time/Days)

Sl. No.	Disaster Response (Time/Days Commencement of Disaster)	Upazila
1	Between 12 to 24 hours	Monirampur, Tala & Keshabpur
2	2-3 days	Satkhira Sadar & Dumuria
3	4-5 days	Jhikargacha
4	7 days	Kalaroa

Limitations of Government Initiatives

It was not mentioned how long the response of the upazila would take to sustain the needs and quality of life of the affected people. All surveyed upazilas confirmed that the office has no stand-by fund that can be utilized immediately when any disaster strikes the area. In fact, what they are doing is to forward first the needs assessment report to the District Commissioner (DC) for proper actions and funding while other assistance normally come from the concerned ministry, that oftentimes cause long delays.

The survey reveals that there are only 3 upazilas with Disaster Management Plan namely Dumuria, Keshabpur and Monirampur. Whereas the remaining 4 upazilas like Kalaroa, Tala, Satkhira Sadar and Jhikargacha, have no plan at all. The plan includes sluice gate construction, embankment construction and Kapodak River re-excavation. In Dumuria, a local NGO has helped to facilitate the development of their plan in 14 Unions in 2004. The planning process was done with the participation of upazila concerned officials and Disaster Management Committee. However, the upazilas have faced difficulties to fully implement their plan due to financial constraints from the government and lack of support from the concerned government authorities. In

worst cases, the plan is as just a mere 'paper exercise' to meet the requirement that the Committee is obliged to do and having no guarantee to realize them.

Based on UTTARAN survey, the Upazila Office statistics for the past five years have shown an increasing trend of affected people and damages in assets. Damages brought about by the floods and waterlogging disasters as specifically shown in Table 4a-g:

Table 4a-g: Disaster trend vis-à-vis affected people, damages in assets and communities

a. Satkhira Sadar Upazila

Period	No. Community/Village	No of UP	Affected People	Estimated cost of properties/Houses Damaged	Casualty /Death	Duration	Causes
2001	12	03	22000	17,085,000	NA	1 month	1. River siltation 2. Excessive Rainfall
2002	17	04	27500	28,750,000	NA	1 month	-Do-
2003	20	05	35000	49,365,000	NA	35 days	-Do-
2004	22	06	45500	77,786,000	NA	45 days	-D0-

b. Tala Upazila

Period	No. Community/Village	No of UP	Affected People	Estimated cost of properties/Houses Damaged	Casualty /Death	Duration	Causes
2001	33	04	30750	6200 Acres of land/697 H/Hs	NA	NA	Flood
2002	No data	12	25000	201 H/Hs	NA	NA	Excessive Rainfall
2003	No data	12	25000	4192 hactre /150 H/Hs	NA	NA	-Do-
2004	No data	12	85000	7000 Acres of Land/ 900 H/Hs	NA	NA	-D0-

c. Kalaroa Upazila

Period	No. Community/Village	No of UP	Affected People	Estimated cost of properties/Houses Damaged	Casualty /Death	Duration	Causes
2001	143	13	191937	720,000,000	NA	3month	1. River Kobatak siltation 2. Flush flood

Period	No. Community/Village	No of UP	Affected People	Estimated cost of properties/Houses Damaged	Casualty /Death	Duration	Causes
							from India
2002	20	03	8429	48,570,000	NA	15 days	1. River Kobatak siltation 2. Excessive rainfall
2003	55	07	12750	159,035,000	NA	1 month	-Do-
2004	38	05	10929	118,560,000	NA	15 days	-Do-

d. Keshabpur Upazila

Period	No. Community/Village	No of UP	Affected People	Estimated cost of properties/Houses Damaged	Casualty /Death	Duration	Causes
2004-05	49	17	21729	132,000,000 and 12904 H/Hs	2 person by drowning	NA	NA

e. Monirampur Upazila

Period	No. Community/Village	No of UP	Affected People	Estimated cost of properties/Houses Damaged	Casualty /Death	Duration	Causes
2003-04	86	09	117450	5200 houses damaged	1 person	NA	NA
2004-05	11	03	1900	40 Houses damaged	NA	NA	NA

f. Jhikargacha Upazila

Period	No. Community/Village	No of UP	Affected People	Estimated cost of properties/Houses Damaged	Casualty /Death	Duration	Causes
2001	05	01	50000	48,090,000	na	3 month	River siltation
2002	25	02	15000	54,875,000	na	do	do
2003	30	04	30000	72,635,000	na	do	do
2004	35	05	60000	15,596,000	na	do	do

g. Dumuria Upazila

Period	No. Community/Village	No of UP	Affected People	Estimated cost of properties/Houses Damaged	Casualty /Death	Duration	Causes
2004-05	NA	14	30700	85,000,000	NA	4 month	Excessive Rainfall and Cyclone
2003-04	NA	14	25000	50,000,000	NA	3 month	Waterlogging due to rainfall
2002-03	NA	14	46692	100,000,000	NA	NA	Rainfall

Assistance provided by the Upazila Office During and Post Disaster, presented in Tables 5&6:

Table 5: During Disaster Period

Period	Upazila	Emergency Relief Assistance	Estimated Beneficiaries
2000-2001	Tala	391 MT Food Grant & 817MT for VGF	73750
	Monirampur	Rice 142MT & Cash 88800 Taka	No Data
	Dumuria	Rice 17.034 MT Cash 5000Tk Winter Cloths 100 pcs. 1703	10 100
2001	Satkhira Sadar	Rice, Polyethylene & Cash	1000
	Kalaroa	Rice, Pressed Rice, Gur (Local Lump Sugar) & Money	801
2001-2002	Dumuria	Rice 18.910MT Cash 15,000 Tk Winter Cloths 285 pcs	1891 30 285
2002	Satkhira Sadar	Rice, Cloths & Cash	5000
	Kalaroa	Rice, Dates, Cloths, Blanket, Winter Cloths & Cash	3187
2002-2003	Dumuria	Rice 28.834MT	2883
2003	Satkhira Sadar	Rice, Dates & Cash	6000
	Tala	39.5MT Food Grant & 167 MT VGF	15000
	Kalaroa	Rice, Dates, Biscuits, Blanket & Cloths	2428
2003- 2004	Monirampur	Rice 88 MT & Cash 50000Tk	No Data
	Dumuria	Rice 50.157MT	5015
2004	Satkhira Sadar	Rice, Dates, Biscuits & Winter Cloths	10000
	Tala	65MT for Grant	51000
	Kalaroa	Rice, Biscuits, Cloths & Cash	25100
2004-2005	Monirampur	Rice 114MT & Cash 80000Tk	No Data
	Keshabpur	Rice 125 MT & Cash 75000Tk	21927
	Dumuria	Rice 86MT Cash 125000Tk	86000 250
	Jhikargacha	Rice 125MT & Cash 75000Tk	21927
2005	Tala	64MT Food Grant & 150MT VGF	49000

Table 6: Post Disaster Period

Period	Upazila	Emergency Relief Assistance	Estimated Beneficiaries
2001	Satkhira Sadar	Tin & Cash	4307
	Tala	Cash 62100Tk for housing rehabilitation	621
2001-2002	Monirampur	150 Bundles Tin	No Data
2002	Satkhira Sadar	Cash	20
	Tala	Cash 20000Tk for housing rehabilitation	20
2003	Kalaroa	150 Bundles Tin & Cash 30000Tk	45
	Satkhira Sadar	Cash	05
	Tala	150 Bundles tin & Cash 25000Tk for housing rehabilitation	55
2004	Kalaroa	100 Bundles tin & Cash 51000Tk	51
	Satkhira Sadar	Tin	50
	Tala	Cash 83000Tk	55
2004-2005	Kalaroa	402 Bundles tin & Cash 25000Tk	225
	Monirampur	110 Bundles tin	No Data
	Keshabpur	250 Bundles tin & 374MT Rice	37400
	Jhikargacha	Rice 274MT	24500
		Cash 195000	195
	195 Bundles tin	195	
	Dates 100 cartoons	1000	
	Winter Cloths	15000	

With the gargantuan impact of the disasters in the mentioned upazilas, it clearly shows that the government could not respond properly and provide a 'standard ration' during emergency and even at post disaster period due to above-mentioned limitations. There is no uniform provision of disaster assistance that will ensure the quality of life and well being of the people. The assistance is far enough to sustain the needs of the victims as the brunt of disaster remain for a longer period that further threatens the health condition of the people. As often than not, they are tremendously suffering from severe malnutrition, water-borne diseases and even death especially among children who are highly vulnerable to this kind of health problems. Generally, peoples' condition in times of disaster is deteriorating day-by-day for obvious reasons.

At pre-disaster period, Upazila Offices are occupied with some activities like undertaking precautionary measures or forecasting cautionary signal to the public; initiate contact with Union Disaster Committee; conduct of emergency meeting to develop plan and strategies with the participation of the UNO, PIO and Chairman. Upazila Officers discuss and assess the implications and dangers of the disaster and request people of most vulnerable areas to take proper and safe shelter. However, most of the surveyed upazilas shared that they have no work or activities at pre-disaster period such as awareness raising, capacity building on disaster management etc.

Upazila Nirbahi Offices have identified some key problems and challenges in view of its disaster response such as emergency relief and rehabilitation works and management. These are the following:

- # *No stand-by fund that can be used for emergency disaster response, if there is, inadequate for the Committee to effectively respond and accommodate the required needs of the disasters victims. Thus, sustainability of the disaster supports remains in question.*
- # *Non-responsive and timely emergency relief provision due to inadequate supply of relief materials/goods, and absence and/or inadequacy of storage relief materials that can be used for emergency response. Thus, absence of safe shelter for storage of relief goods/materials is also a problem to most upazilas.*
- # *Bad communication caused serious disruption in transporting affected people to safer grounds or designated places. It also hampers to hasten during disaster distribution of any emergency relief assistance especially in those remote communities due to inaccessibility and/or severe damaged of the public roads.*

They have also shared some significant issues and concerns to effectively address or mitigate the aftermath of any disasters in their respective upazila such as:

- # The Committee should have regular budget to execute their plan and effectively undertake its tasks/responsibilities in times of disaster
- # Storage of adequate emergency relief supply to meet the required needs of the poor victims.
- # Need to undertake rehabilitation at post disaster to rebuild the lives and communities devastated by the disaster.
- # Strengthen the existing UP Disaster Management Committee. While pursue the needs towards organizing the same Committee in other UPs and Villages that highly vulnerable and prone to disasters.
- # There is a need to organize a separate Committee at union and village level or expand the role of the existing Disaster Management
- # Strengthen/sustain GO-NGO cooperation
- # Activate UP Disaster Community by enhancing their knowledge and skills through training
- # Work for restoration of the drainage system and navigability of rivers to resolve waterlogging problem.

NGOs and Donors Involvement

Undeniably, the active supports and involvement of NGOs (local & national) and donor agencies are truly visible at pre, during and post disasters period in the Southwest region. They have been involved in various activities and interventions concerning disaster response and management like capacity building on disaster mitigation and management, community mobilization, emergency relief work, rehabilitation etc. It may be mentioned here that the involvement of the international

donor agencies is through their local partners and counterpart working in the area. Thus, there were instances where donor's representatives visited the affected areas.



To mention a few, these are some of the NGOs and donor agencies (Table 7) actively involved in the 7-surveyed upazilas in the last three disasters:

Table 7: List of NGOs and Donor Agencies Involved in the Last Three Major Disasters

NGOs	Donor Agencies
UTTARAN	CARE
Rishilpi	DFID
Caritas	Oxfam-GB
Nijera Kori	SDC
BRAC	Misereor-Germany
Bhumista	Trocaire Ireland
Pallichatona	Action Aid Bangladesh
Shawnirvar	Food for the Hungry
SUS	NETZ Germany
SETU	Concern Ireland
Shusilon	ICCO
Shawdesh	EDM
RODO	Canada Fund
Shamadhan	UNICEF
IDO	Red Crescent
Bachte-Shekha	Islamic Relief
Jagorani Chakra	Khan Foundation
RRF	World Vision
Women Job Creation Center	World Food Programme
Ideal	
Mukti Parishad	

Issues and Concerns Encountered

UTTARAN has identified some critical issues and concerns that bear significant impact at ensuring quality and prompt disaster response and management among service providers in the region such as:

1. Lack of coordination from both government and NGOs in emergency response during and post disasters.

This resulted to non-uniform data or statistics of the actual damaged and number of people affected; incidence of duplication and overlapping of support and non-



optimization of resources. Although in 2000 flood, all sectors and concerned agencies had come forward and coordinate with each other while some were even manage to collaborate and complement with their disaster interventions in the region. However, after 2000 disaster these efforts are seemed diminishing and not sustained. Proper coordination and collaboration is imperative in view of effective and efficient response to disasters. This in fact provides a valuable learning to the organization to sustain and maintain coordination, collaboration, and even partnership to relevant stakeholders, civil society, LEBs, community leaders, and government concerned agencies. The coordination among key actors is vital to strengthen working relationships and collaboration on disaster response (at pre, during and post period). This will help to optimize intervention and prevents competition and duplication of works, and wastage of resources among service providers.

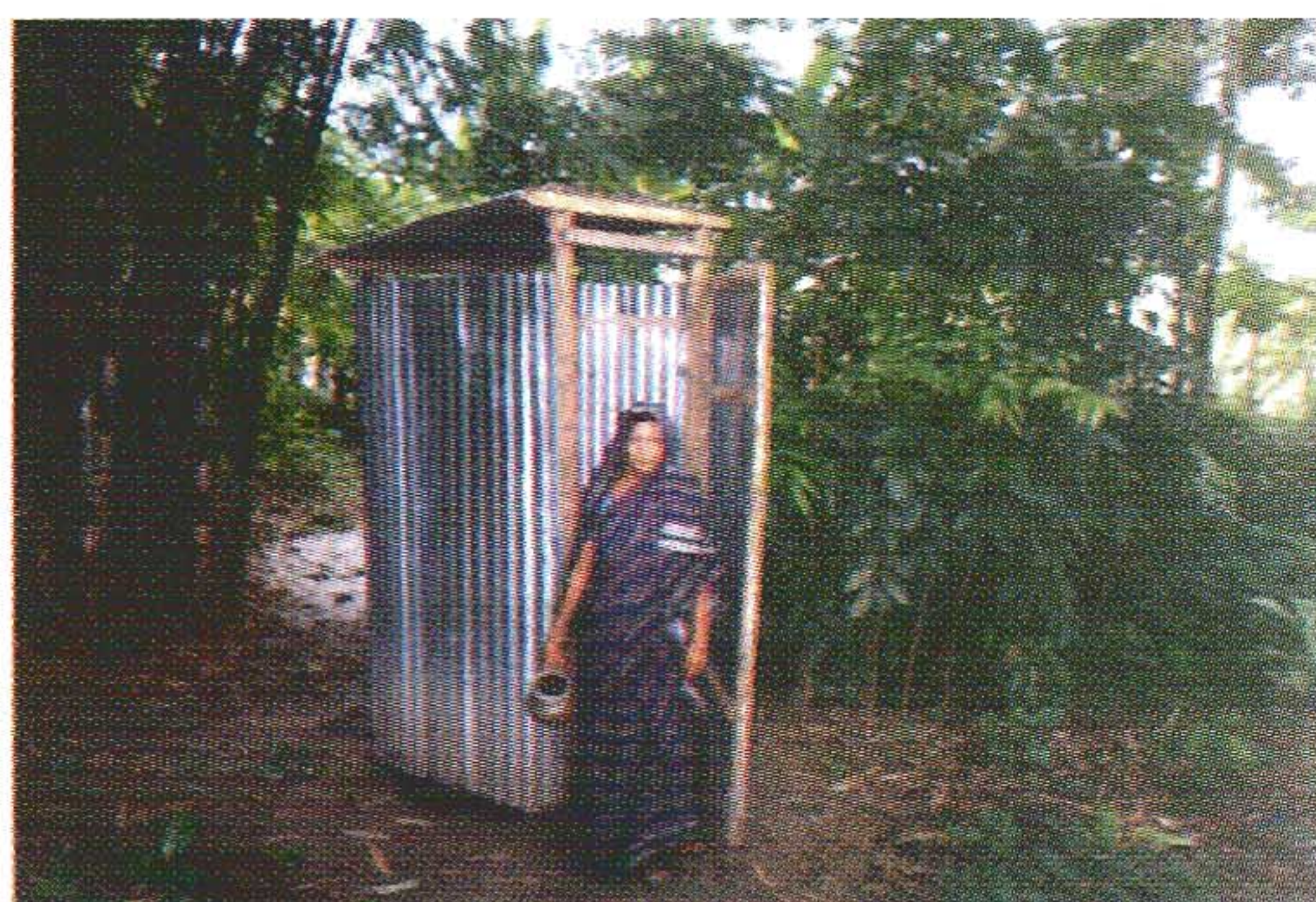
2. Strengthen Disaster Management Committee at upazila and union.

In order for both Committees to effectively perform their tasks, the government should seriously take into consideration at making the Committees actively functional at pre, during and post disasters. There is need to institute a clear mandates and supportive policy including the

provision of regular budget and storage emergency supply for prompt disaster response; ensuring the mandatory formation of disaster management committee in all upazilas and union including villages; expansion of Committee roles vis-à-vis conduct of pre-disaster activities like mitigation and management; continuing capacity building for skills and knowledge enhancement; bridging the gaps between GO-NGOs for better cooperation; and immediate policy legislation for the adoption of Tidal River Management (TRM) for long-term solution to the waterlogging problems in the region.

3. Lack of gender standards for humanitarian response.

It is noticeable that gender-based needs consideration is set aside. Women needs are often not taken as priority or just being sidelined in most cases. There is need for all service providers such government



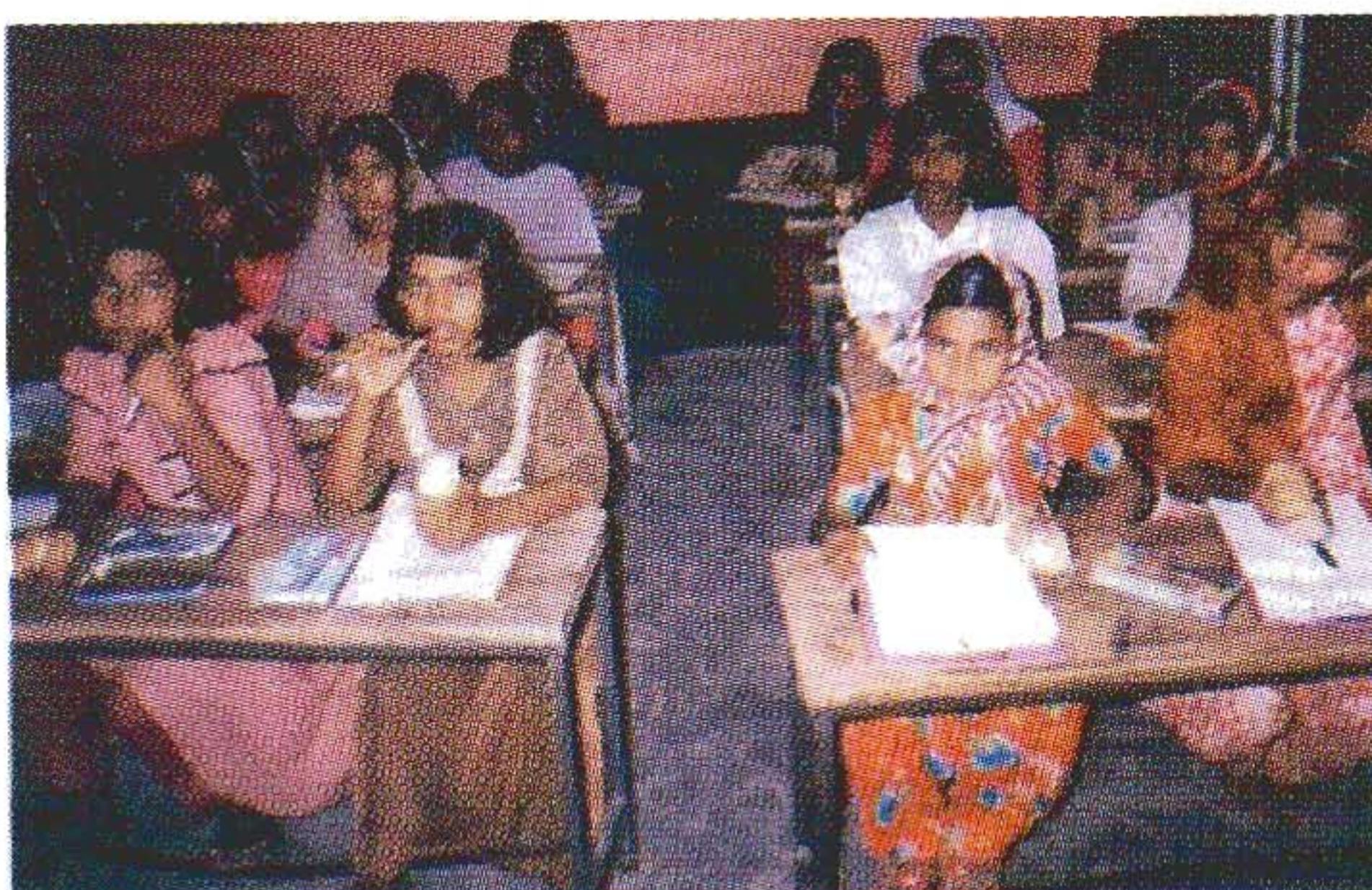
and NGOs to integrate gender perspective in the conduct of assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in their respective disaster intervention. Service providers should take this concern with prime consideration.

Service providers should organize camp management committee with direct involvement of the beneficiaries, in

particular women, to look after the orderliness of the camps, monitor situation and as well as on their various issues and concerns that may arise. There should be specific provision to make sure the balance nutritional requirements of women especially those pregnant and lactating mothers including infant children are responded accordingly to arrest premature delivery and infant mortality. Besides, separate sanitary facilities like toilets and washrooms, and other personal hygienic needs such as soap, sanitary napkins and clothes and among others were provided

4. Special care and attention to school-going children.

Emergency assistance generally provides lesser scope for the specific needs of school-going children. There is a need to respond on this issue through Emergency School Feeding Programme (ESFP). Primarily to improve the health situation of the children



participants along that side to facilitate the reduction of dropout rate, increase enrolment rate, increase number in regular school going children, improve students performance by active participation in the class, attentiveness in their studies, enhance interest and motivation.

5. Stakeholders' participation.

More often than not, people who are victims of any disasters are treated as mere passive recipients of any assistance and humanitarian related intervention or projects. Essentially, the status of service delivery, quantity and quality of inputs provided to stakeholders of all categories and at all levels are perceived by themselves. Feedbacks especially from the primary stakeholders would

be taken into account, thus the intervention process must be exposed to the critical observations of the stakeholders, as measure of ensuring their participation and accountability as



well. Moreover, on the beneficiary selection, political influences affect the process objectively without having any bias. Open selection of beneficiaries with the presence of group members, local elected UP, and elite members help to ease the identification of legitimate beneficiaries.

6. Absence of prompt disaster response structure and mechanisms.

Almost every year, the Southwest region of Bangladesh is visited by disasters particularly flood and waterlogging that cause tremendous damage and agony to the lives and resources of the community people. Due to the absence of community-based response structure, contingency plan and manpower who can be mobilized during strike of any disasters. Along with this, the lack of financial resources and effective mechanisms available at the community level to reduce the vulnerability and impact caused by the disaster. There is a need to develop a pool of community disaster response volunteers in every UP especially those considered as disaster prone areas, who can be mobilized within short time to undertake a prompt response in times of disasters. These organized volunteers should be equipped with proper training, equipment and orientation on the first aid skills on rescue and evacuation operation, assessment report preparation, and orientation on storage, delivery and management of emergency supplies. This volunteering spirit will help strengthen relationship within and among affected communities and individuals while fostering the value of

camaraderie. Moreover, there is a need to strengthen the disaster management committees at union and village level and/or organize the same committee in other communities whose primary task is to facilitate and coordinate disaster works in the area. The committee will serve as the focal body to work with affected UPs or communities in the aspect of quick disaster response such as evacuation, situational and needs assessment, coordination with concerned agencies and emergency relief distribution. The committee members should not be limited to what was mentioned above, but, should be expanded by including other relevant actors in the community such as opinion leaders, Imam, Matabbar (Village Leaders), and representatives of any professional groups, and primary stakeholders or beneficiaries.

7. Lack of capacity of local authorities on disaster management.

It is prevalent that in most cases the local authorities are incapable to effectively handle the situation as disaster strikes the region. Because of the frequent occurrence of the disaster in the region, what is needed is to capacitate local authorities, in partnership with the local communities, NGOs or the civil society, in disaster planning, preparedness and management, and resource mobilization in order to minimize severe effects in the lives of the people. However, there are households who have lesser capacity to recover and to re-establish themselves after the occurrence of a disaster. Hence, there should be a special focus to families with less recovery potentials. There is a need to provide appropriate support to reduce the impact of disaster.

8. Lack of mechanism for sharing of good practices and learning.

There is lack of effort among key actors in the region for establishing a concrete mechanism for good practices and learning sharing vis-à-vis disaster related initiatives. This can be a good source for effective disaster management strategies and guide for quality service delivery on relief and

rehabilitation works. Though there are organized networks in various parts of the region but in most cases are non-functional and works in 'isolation' to the networks members. It is then crucial to expand membership and/or reach out with other relevant stakeholders and organizations that are working in the region.

9. Seek support of donor community for long-term partnership.

Most donors' support and involvement is viewed to be limited on during and post disaster i.e. emergency relief and rehabilitation works. Since the Southwest region is facing with frequent disasters, there is a need to establish long-term partnership from among the donor community to establish a more sustainable community-based disaster management for the flood prone and waterlogged areas of the region. The partnership should emphasize on capacity development of the community people to reduce the vulnerability caused by the disaster, specifically aim to increase awareness and capacity on disaster response through education and training of grassroots people on disaster preparedness, mitigation and community-based management; provide support on income generation activities (IGA) to vulnerable families or groups for their alternative livelihood management; strengthen community mobilization and action through active engagement of the civil society, LEBs, CBOs and NGOs on disaster response and management; undertake popular advocacy and campaign for the development of alternative option for sustainable disaster management in the Southwest region; strengthen collaboration and community ownership through formation of functional committees and structures for effective self-help management and adaptation strategy development; and strengthen local government structure of disaster prone areas so that action can be taken immediately for undertaking post-disaster activity. Moreover, the donor community can help NGOs and civil society to carry out effective advocacy program to instigate peoples' initiatives so that the government of Bangladesh along with major bilateral and multilateral donors' becomes convinced to adopt eco-friendly and sustainable disaster management initiatives including Tidal River Management (TRM), as popular solution for the waterlogging problem in the Southwest region.

Strategies: Addressing Sustainability Issue

UTTARAN has identified a three-phase strategy to reduce the impact as aftermath of the disaster while meeting the needs of the affected individuals and communities. However, the issue should be tackled with short-term, mid-term as well as long-term perspective. Unless this is not taken into consideration, we would end up to the vicious cycle of response that is simply 'repairing the physical damages and just making ease to those affected poor people without addressing the fundamental issues behind'. Thus, it is essential in all processes in the execution of these strategies- is the community participation to ensure ownership and accountability. All knowing, that most key actors or service providers are focusing their efforts on during and post phases of the disasters and stop from there. While taking aside, the imperative of the pre-disaster phase and undertaking a paradigm shift to ensure sustainability.

1. Short-term Strategy

Emergency food aid is the primary requirement for the marooned hardcore poor men and women. In addition, those who have left their homestead and have taken shelters elsewhere also need food provision. Besides, the provision of safe drinking water, latrine, and medical supports are needed so that epidemic will be prevented. Immediate relief operation includes:

Emergency food aid (dry food or cooked food in relief camps)

Safe drinking water

Sanitation facility like latrine and washrooms for both male and female.

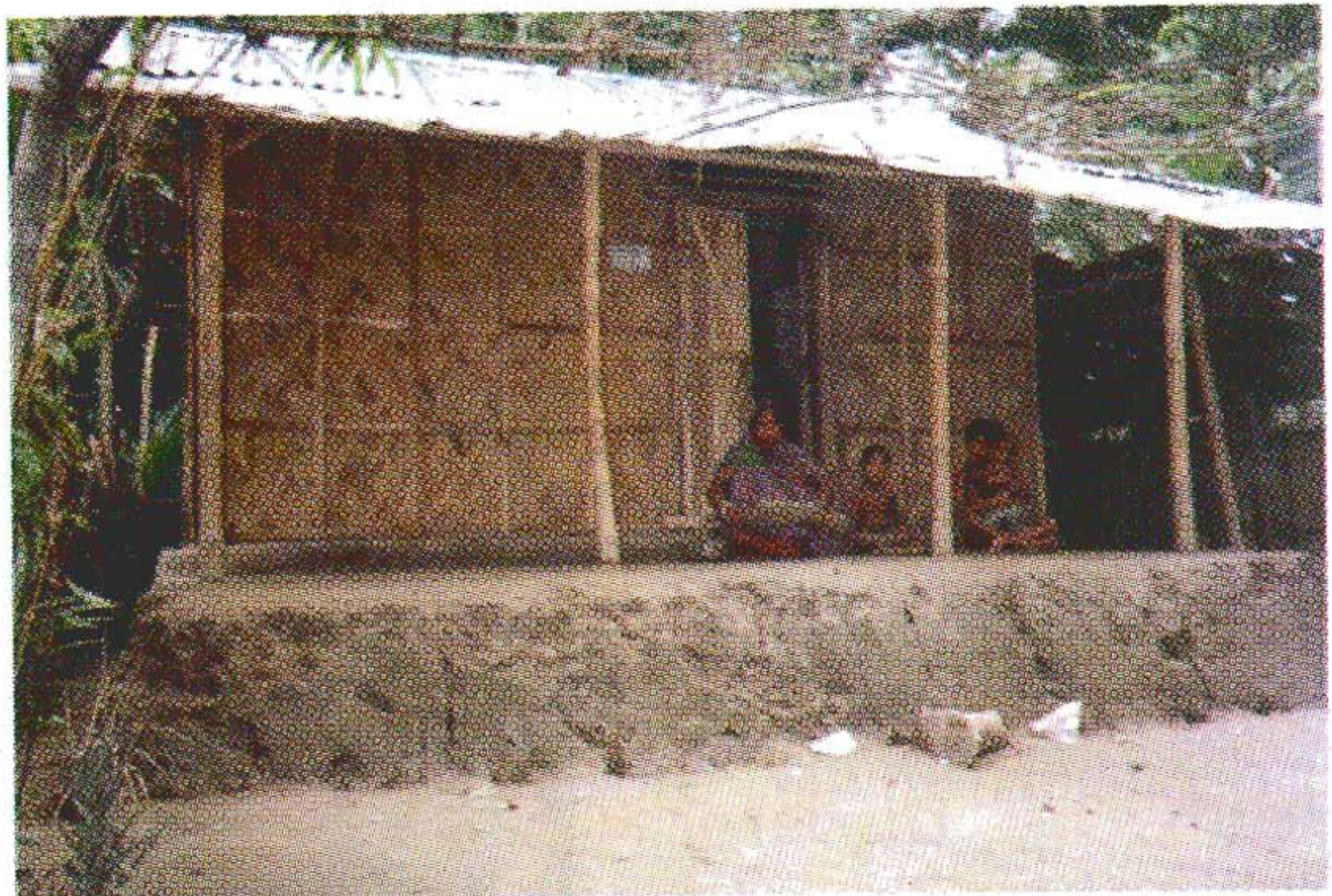


- # Medical operation by sending medical teams in flood affected areas
- # Distribution of baby/infant food and specially prepared food package for pregnant and lactating mothers.
- # Provision of emergency clothing and 'personal hygienic' supplies for women and children
- # Provision of fodder for affected livestock
- # In case of prolong flood, distribution of winter cloths.

2. Mid-term Strategy

The rehabilitation of disaster-affected people and communities is necessary. The following rehabilitation activities should be taken under this intervention:

- # Construction and repair of damaged homestead
- # Agriculture rehabilitation
- # Employment generation
- # Construction and repair of damaged schools



- # Provision of School Feeding Program to encourage attendance among school-going children
- # Provision of feeding program for pregnant and lactating mothers.
- # Repair of damaged public roads and culverts.

3. Long-term Strategy

So far, the response to disaster is limited to emergency response and rehabilitation works. There is a need to undertake a 'paradigm-shift' to ensure sustainability by putting emphasis on the development of an effective disaster management policy and sustainable strategies to reduce vulnerabilities as aftermath of disasters in the region.

In the absence of such policy and strategy to manage disaster, their impact in human and economic terms will continue to be severe.

Parallel to this, is to develop the capacity of the community people to protect their lives and resources, and reduce vulnerability and impact from the aftermath of natural disasters through community-based disaster management. Specifically by undertaking the following:

Strengthening community-based organization on disaster preparedness and management

Social mobilization and sensitization process at community level

Provision of creating income generating activities to most vulnerable families

Advocacy and campaign for sustainable disaster management by engaging civil society, LEBs, CBOs and NGOs on community-based disaster management and adaptation strategy development; and persuasion with the key actors and policy makers for effective and long-term disaster mitigation and management.

Promotion of Tidal River Management (TRM). It is a

popular solution for waterlogging problem in the Southwest coastal region of Bangladesh. It is a process of land formation through sedimentation and maintenance of navigability where tidal water works as a vehicle for transportation of silt or clay particles from the Bay of Bengal to the tidal flood plains to offset land subsidence that raise the surface level of land with new alluvial deposits.



Conclusion

The vulnerabilities and impact caused by disasters be it man-made or natural brings unaccountable havoc to the lives and livelihood of the people in the Southwest region of Bangladesh. Thousand of people have fled in an exodus to save their precious lives from the cruelty of disasters. Millions worth of properties and infrastructures have been damaged and washed away to nowhere from one disaster to another.

Living in disaster prone region, is seemed either bitter fate or curse beyond the grip. People's faces portrayed with uncertain hopelessness, having no options but to accept their destiny against their own will. Much challenges have been identified that need to be taken with prime consideration. Along with these, the challenge of bringing all key actors from various sectors, in particular, from the government, NGOs/civil society and donor community to collectively frame holistic and integrated adaptation strategies and mechanisms fitted to context of the region, and develop policy to ensure sustainable disaster management in consultation with all stakeholders is imperative. Moreover, the community involvement in the process is a prerequisite to ensure ownership and accountability as well.

The challenge has set forth what enabling actionable strategies can be done to address and outlive the poor people of the region from getting drown further into the deep of hardship and miseries brought about by disasters.

About **UTTARAN**

Background

In the context of severe social and economic discrimination prevailing in the Southwestern part of the country, Uttaran (means Upliftment) started its campaign to uphold the rights of the poor and underprivileged in 1985. Since then, the organization has evolved by assisting the disadvantaged and abused people on their struggle for human rights and justice while ensuring their effective participation in various spheres of development.

In the beginning, Uttaran has concentrated on working for the social upliftment of the rural poor. It focused on landless especially women, outcastes, untouchables and religio-ethnic minorities who are victims of socio-economic classification, hierarchic caste system and the male-dominated society. Uttaran aimed at capacitating these individuals with tools like group formation needed to deal with their social, environmental, health, economic and cultural predicaments onwards self-reliance and making them as responsive agents of their own development.

From 1988 to present, Uttaran has expanded its initiatives by implementing diversified social development programs as reflected to the needs and context of its target groups and communities. To maximize impact, the organization implements programs adhering integrated development approach, providing counterparts and other supports as needed.

With recognition and acceptance as the leading organization in the SW region and with its increased capacity and capability, strong organizational setup and networking with the NGOs, CBOs, media and civil society, Uttaran has gained such respect as an institution in social development fields of Bangladesh.

Today, Uttaran is actively present and operating in three

strategic districts of the region namely Satkhira, Jessore and Khulna with 11 branches covering 25,000 direct partner-beneficiaries, of which 67% are women and 34% are outcaste, untouchables and religio-ethnic minorities.

Vision

A society with gender, class, and caste equality.

Mission

Equip the disadvantaged people with the tools needed to deal with their social, environmental, health, economic and cultural issues and concerns.

Our Core Values

- * Respects the unique worth of every person.
- * Values individual and believes in the equal rights of all.
- * Encourages people to fulfill their potentials. Thus, sustainable development is indeed the realization of those potentials.
- * Works with hope.
- * Exercises responsible stewardship.
- * Values unity and teamwork to achieve positive and lasting change.
- * Believes that preservation and promotion of common good is the object of social justice, as it aims to protect and enhance the rights of all people to human dignity; reduce social, economic, and political inequalities and remove cultural inequities.
- * Believes that transformation must be borne from consciousness honed in human rights and values, acted upon with total commitment to a clear and holistic vision and immerse within the concrete struggle and challenges of developing society.
- * Values transparency and commitment to learning.
- * Values prudence and wise utilization of resources.

Goals

- * Remove the barriers of social inequalities and discrimination.
- * Eradicate poverty by creating enabling environment for opportunities, quality livelihood and leadership.
- * Promote environmental protection and sustainable management.
- * Provide education to the underprivileged and ultra poor.
- * Ensure people's participation and good governance.
- * Promote human rights and social justice.
- * Promote primary health care and alternative health services.
- * Promote eco-sensitive and sustainable agriculture.
- * Sustain quality of life in times of natural and man-made disasters.

Strategic Approach

- * Involve women, outcaste, untouchable and religio-ethnic minorities directly in the whole development process.
- * Community organizing, capacity building and institutional strengthening.
- * Perform advocacy on various social, economic, health, environmental and cultural issues and concerns towards policy change.
- * Provide formal, non-formal and technical education.
- * Citizenship building for effective and participatory governance.
- * Provide access to resources to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment.
- * Establish linkage and partnership.

Beneficiaries:

30,000 direct partner-beneficiaries, of which, 70% are women, of which, 33% are outcaste, untouchables and religio-ethnic minorities in three strategic districts of the region namely Satkhira, Khulna, and Jessore.

Legal Status:

Registered in the Department of Social Service in 1985 bearing a registration number Satkhira 6/85 and the NGO Affairs Bureau in 1988 with registration number 255.

Development Activities

1. Human Development Program
2. Environment Program
3. Education Program
4. Good Governance and Democratization Program
5. Legal Aid and Literacy Program
6. Primary Health Care Program
7. Agriculture Program
8. Disaster Management Program

Support Facilities

1. Institute for Development Research and Training
2. Grassroots Resource Information and Knowledge Development Center, also known as Public Library

Donor-Partners:

Care-Bangladesh, ActionAid Bangladesh, Manusher Jonno, Oxfam-GB, Trocaire Ireland, Misereor-Germany, HFHI-Bangladesh, NGO Forum for DWSS-Bangladesh, AED, Sight Savers International, Bangladesh Global Weter Partnership, and VSOB.

Previous Partners:

ARD-Bangladesh, World Food Programme, BHC, DFID, BRAC-ESP, The Asia Foundation, Japan Embassy, HKI, EDM, ICCO, CIDA, Manitese Italy, Cafod Netherlands, Oxfam USA, Australian High Commission, The Royal Netherlands Embassy, Andhre Helpi Germany, ALRD, WARPO, ATP, PRIP-Trust, IVS-Jobs and ASRIP.

Contact Details :

UTTARAN

Head Office

Tala, Satkhira, Bangladesh

Phone : +88 0471-64006 Ext-283

Mobile : 0171-182344

Dhaka Liaison Office :

42, Satmasjid Road (3rd Floor)

Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1209

Bangladesh.

Phone : +88 02 9122 302

Mobile : 0171-828305

e-mail : uttaran@bdonline.com

Submerged Into The Deep is a documentary account vis-à-vis the plight and challenges aftermath of flood and waterlogging disasters in the Southwest region of Bangladesh. It highlights the complexity of the disastrous landscapes of the region and underlying challenges. It provides a brief revisiting on the advent of the disaster as well as the evolution and nature of the problems. It presents the vulnerability and impact of disasters to the people of the Southwest region.

The document shows some remarkable efforts of all key actors in the Southwest region such as the government, NGOs, donors and among others during and post disaster period to sustain quality of life and rebuilding of shattered communities. It includes key problems and challenges in view of disaster response such as emergency relief, rehabilitation works and management to effectively address or mitigate the aftermath of any disasters in the region.

The document identifies some critical issues and concerns that bear significant impact at ensuring quality and prompt disaster response and management among service providers in the region. Finally, it illustrates the three-phase strategy to reduce the impact as aftermath of the disaster while meeting the needs of the affected individuals and communities. Community participation is essential in all processes to ensure ownership and accountability for without it, all efforts are vain. Thus, there is necessity for paradigm shift in dealing with disasters to ensure sustainability.

UTTARAN

Head Office: Tala, Satkhira, Bangladesh, Phone # 88-0471-64006 Ext. 283, Mobile: 0171-182344

Dhaka Liaison Office: 42 Satmasjid Road (3rd Floor), Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh.

Phone # 88-02-9122302, mobile # 0171-828305 e-mail: uttaran@bdonline.com