

**044 Survival Mechanism of Flood Affected People: A Study of Two Villages of Dhunat Upazila under Bogra District**  
(Published in December, 1987)

**a) Researchers' Identity**

1. A.H.M. Nizamuddin Chowdhury, Associate Instructor  
M.Sc. (Geography), Dhaka University;  
M.S. (Urban Geography), University of Uppsala, Sweden
2. Md. Abdul Khaleque, Deputy Director;  
M.Sc. (Statistics), Rajshahi University, Rajshahi
3. Nasimul Ghani, Deputy Director;  
M.S.S. (Economics), Dhaka University, Dhaka
4. A.K.M. Khairul Alam, Assistant Director;  
B.A. (Social Work), Rajshahi University;  
M.S.W (Social Work), Bandung School of Social Welfare, Indonesia

**b) Objectives**

The major objectives of the study can be stated as follows:

- i) To find out the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the flood affected people;
- ii) To measure the extent of damage caused by the flood;
- iii) To discover the food habits during the flood and afterwards;
- iv) To obtain information on procurement of food, clothes and finding of shelter during the flood;
- v) To obtain estimate of crops planted after the receding of flood water; and
- vi) To find out the nature of outbreak and treatment of diseases during the flood.

**c) Executive summary**

This survey was designed to collect information on six selected explanations of the survival mechanism of flood affected people of two villages namely Bathuabari and Nabinagar under Dhunat Upazila of Bogra district. The six explanations are shelter, food, clothes, money, disease and post flood plantation of crops. The extent of damage caused by the recent flood has been estimated and found that the village Bathuabari was partially inundated by flood water

(about half of the total area) where a total of about 55% of the total population were affected. A total of 96 (53.33%) houses were damaged both fully and partially. 94 (52.22%) trees of homestead garden of different varieties, 48 livestock animals and 371 poultry birds died and were washed away by flood water. 83.70% of Aman crops in 29.61 ha and 70.94% of Jute in 9.31 ha were totally damaged.

Huge quantity of household goods was also damaged. As a process of survival mechanism, the villagers took some initiatives to find shelter, food, clothes, money and fight against diseases. The places where the affected people took shelter were 123(68.33%) in the own houses, 39(21.67%) in relatives houses 11(6.11%) in neighbors houses, 2(1.11%) in the road and 5(2.78%) in the relief camp. Since Bathuabari was not totally submerged by the flood water most of the people could remain in their own houses as usual. There were some houses where flood water entered into but the people of those houses did not move any where and stayed at home on chowki (wooden cots) or by making machine (wooden platform). Most of the people 113 (62.78%) had two meals a day which contained a very low food value. The procedures of procurement of food were from own stock 48(26.7%), relatives 39(21.67%), loan 23(12.78%) and by working as a day labourer in other better off people's houses 12(6.67%). Moreover 16 households were provided with government relief; the amount varies from 1.5 Kg of rice and wheat. Most of the people of this village faced problems of shortage of clothes which aggravated during the flood. But the people could manage and overcome the problem by drying clothes in their body after taking bath. Disease was a common feature in the village during the flood period. 84(46.67%) households suffered from different diseases. The diseases were mainly water borne like dysentery and diarrhoea and also fever, cold & cough. About 230 people suffered from fever, 77 from dysentery, 39 from diarrhoea and 11 from cold & cough. Most of the people were treated by village doctors. Many got cured and some were still suffering at the time of collecting data. The reasons of not going to Upazila health complex, for better treatment, as reported by the villagers was that they were not well attended by the doctors of Upazila health complex. Nobody died in this village during the flood period. No programme of vaccination was undertaken by the government or other agencies in the village during the flood period, only 12.22% of the households planted Aman seedlings after the flood, others could not due to scarcity of money & seedlings and because some lands were still under flood water.

In the village Nabinagar the intensity of flood was more, as a result extent of damage was more than the village Bathuabari. The village is situated in the low lying area encircled by a river in the Western side and a canal by the

Eastern. The recent flood inundated the whole village under 0.91 to 1.5 meter water. About 95% of the total population was affected in the flood and about 90% houses were damaged both fully and partially by flood water. 1636 trees of homestead garden of different varieties and 405 bamboo groves, 26% of livestock animals and 60% percent of poultry birds died and were washed away by flood water. 100% of the Aman crops in 3.82 hectare and 54% of Jute in 0.85 hectare were also totally damaged. About 58% of the households of this village were homeless during the flood and took shelter in different places. Among the places 38% of the households took shelter at relatives' houses, 16% at neighbours' houses 4% in the roads and the rest 42% remained in their own houses on chowki or by making machine. Most of the people i.e. about 70% had two meals a day with very low food value. About 70% of the households procured food from their own stock. 10% of the households procured food from their own stock. 10% procured by working in better off people's house, 6% from relatives and 8% purchased from the market by taking loan. Moreover 12% of the households were provided with govt. relief as supplement amounting to 1 Kg to 5 Kg of rice and wheat per household. About 72% of the households faced problems for the shortage of clothes during the flood. The main problem was drying of clothes and the maintenance of the privacy of body especially for the women. About 86% of the households suffered from different diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, fever, cold and cough. Of these 23% of the household members suffered from diarrhoea, 11% dysentery, 10% fever and 6% cold & cough. About 47% of the patients were treated by the local village doctors and 53% did not get any treatment at all. Only one child died of diarrhoea during the flood. No programme of vaccination was undertaken by the govt. or other agencies in the village during the flood period. Aman seedlings were not at all planted after the flood in the village due to scarcity of money.

#### **d) Conclusion**

The study was conducted at the time of receding of flood water from the villages. At that time the flood water receded from the houses of these villages but remained in the agricultural lands. On the basis of the experiences of seven days survey work carried out in these villages the following observations have been made:

- 1) The people were very enthusiastic to report about the extent of damage caused by the recent flood with a view in their minds that they might be provided with relief goods.
- 2) Most of the people of the villages were jobless because there was very little scope of work as the seedlings of Aman crops could not be planted.

The people were found sitting idle at home or passing their days by gossiping and chatting.

- 3) Some people of the villages started work as post flood economic activities for their survival. The activities were mainly drying of Jute which narrowly escaped from flood water, catching of fishes, pulling of rickshaws and rowing of boats.
- 4) Most of the school age children were found roaming hither and thither and reported that they were not sent to the school by their parents because of their poor economic condition.
- 5) Though BRDB has established UCCA in Dhunat Upazila. There were no primary cooperative societies in these villages from where people could benefit by taking loan for starting small business. No direct impact of post flood rehabilitation programme for the flood affected people by the government or other agencies were discernable in those villages.

#### **e) Recommendations**

- 1) The village Nabinagar is a low lying area and poorly communicated. The rain water inundates the village almost every year. Therefore, an embankment should be constructed which can protect the annual inundation permanently as well as used as a road.
- 2) Under the post flood rehabilitation programme, the flood affected people should be provided with construction materials at free of cost or credit in soft terms and conditions for the repairing and construction of their houses. At the same time programme should be chalked out to distribute the seeds and seedlings of Rabi crops.
- 3) Since Aman crops are damaged almost every year by flood water in these villages irrigation management should be developed to increase the command area for Boro & wheat cultivation.
- 4) Employment opportunities should be created through the establishing of small cottage and handicrafts industries.
- 5) UCCA of Dhunat should come forward to form primary cooperative societies and engage the people in income generating activities by disbursing loan.
- 6) Diseases like diarrhoea and dysentery normally break out after the flood so measures should be taken to check the spread of the disease. Post flood immunization programme should also be taken in hand.