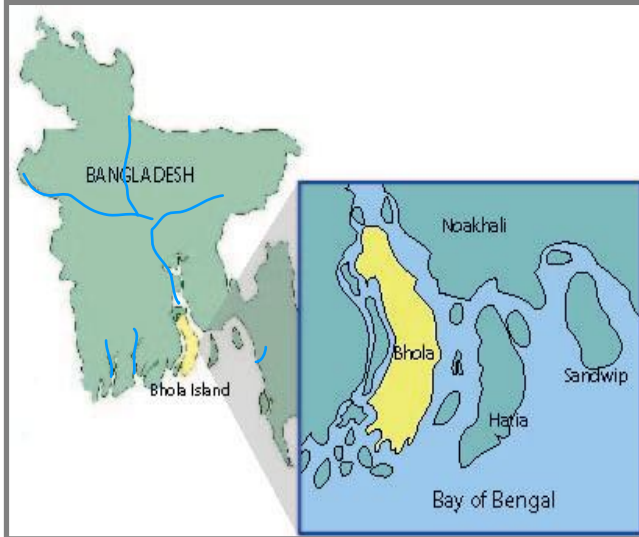


Receding Flood Water Hits Bhola Island: Fourteen Thousand Family Lost Homestead

Bhola is an island situated in the extreme south, i.e., in the *Meghna* estuary of Bangladesh, where joint flow of the *Ganges* and the *Brhamaputra* met the Bay of Bengal. Now the receding flood water of total South Asia flowing down,



Geographical location of Bhola Island

which is approximately in the speed of two millions cubic feet per second, this are causing high level of river erosion, which has caused severe plights to approximately 15,000 poor families of 14 unions of *Bhola sadar*, *Daulatkhan*, *Borhunuddin*, *Tazimuddin*, *Char Fassion* and *Monpura Upazila* most of whom lost their homestead in overnight in unprecedented way, e.g., around half kilometer of area eroded by one night in *Dhonia* and *Mirzakhalo* union. Most of these poor families have to take shelter in high embankment or in high land area in subhuman condition or take shelter with relatives in nearby area or going around aimlessly with all the belongings in a truck and trolley with family for a piece of land or migrating to Dhaka. They need shelter, housing and land. And who took shelters they need food, medical, water and sanitation



Loss of Homestead due to river erosion

facilities etc.

The mighty flow devoured about two hundred square kilometer of the island in the last few years displacing about two lacs of people, the erosion took serious turn during current flood, rendering over 50 thousands people homeless. Most of the areas of those *upazila* are also now inundated, as the sea level is still 3 to 5 feet above the normal level due to the influence of full moon. The river erosion will take serious turn during August and September, as water flow will increase due to the rains and floods in upper stream. Primary information on river erosion effects is as follows;

Case 1 : Rabiya's Glommy Future



Rabiya is a student of class seven from village : *Bolramsura* of *Dhonia* union, *Bhola sadar* lost their home, now they took shelter in embankment, all of their family belongings lost except few cots, utensils and some cloths. Only breadwinner father cannot go for work, she is unable to go to school for last one month. Mitigating natural call is a problem, as they don't have any toilet. Even their present shelter sometime inundated with high tide. So far they received 8 kg rice and 1 kg flatten rice. Her father expressed his frustration that, he don't know after the flood where he will make his home.

| Upazila | Unions | Effected area in sq.km | Family lost homestead. Approximate |
|-------------|--|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bhola sadar | Illisha, Dhonia, Kachia, Shibpur, | 9 | 5000 |
| Borhunuddin | Hasannagar, Pakkhia, Gangapur, Sasra | 8 | 3000 |
| Tazimuddin | Sonapur, Chandpur, Molomchar, | 5.65 | 850 |
| Daulatkhan | Sayedpur, Bhavanipur, Boromankia, Modonpur | 6 | 650 |
| Charfassion | Madras | 2 | 100 |
| Monpura | Monpura, Hazirhat | 3 | 4240 |

COAST is an NGO working in whole Bhola Island since 1998, inheriting a project of an international NGO who were working in the island since 1984. The organization is directly supporting 35 thousands families of *Bhola & Cox's Bazar* with sustainable Micro Finance, Institution Building, Education, Primary Health Care and Regenerative Agricultural Programs, currently being supported by *ActionAid*, *Stromme Foundation*, *Manusher Jonno* (funded by DFID, managed by CARE), *Christian Aid* and *PKSF*. The NGO has the experience of disaster mitigation especially from the cyclone of 1991 and 1997. It has

already started relief work in allocating taka 10 lacs from its own fund as follows;

- i. Immediate help of @ taka 2000 per family for most vulnerable 400 families
- ii. Establishment of 3 satellite clinic to provide free medical support to the families who has taken shelter in the embankment, total cost will be taka 1.00 lac and
- iii. Support to government in respect of distributing food, worth of taka 1.00 lac, it should be noted that government has allocated 330 tons of rice, which just has started to reaching poor families through locally elected leaders.



Families are wondering temporary shelter on the riverside embankment.

Apart from this short term immediate measures COAST is planning a long term study to assess the impact of river erosion on poor families, identify the trend of erosion in Bhola and to propose appropriate measures in respect of river erosion from national level in considering this as disaster too. We believe that there would be an strong advocacy issue to keep the government owned land and emerging sandbar islands should be kept for rehabilitation of those river eroded families. COAST has already started and lobbying in this regard.

Case 3 Josna survived with housing material but where her house will be.



Josna's husband have had betel leaf and cigarette shops, which has river eroded few days back, her husband is now jobless. Josna took shelter in her father's house, now she came to take away the materials of her homestead, within next two three days these land will also go under river. She doesn't know where her family will take shelter.

COAST is still assessing the situation and there will be more intensification of river erosion, there will be more need of relief and rehabilitation work, which should contains;

- i. Support to the poor families on housing either by interest free loan or by cash help or by construction materials;
- ii. Tube-well installation and water sealed latrine supply to the families who

took shelters in different places;



ngings.

- iii. Food stuff supply for at least 3-6 months to the families where especially children and old people are in vulnerable situation;
- iv. Cash for work in the effected areas to construct necessary infrastructure and also to support the poor families with income;
- v. Medical support to the families where the density of shelter taking people are high at least for next 3-6 months;
- vi. Support schools and school going children to resume their studies;
- vii. Formation of groups of those people and long-term livelihood support in taking them in mainstream programs of COAST.

In coming weeks COAST will update the situation and now requesting the development partners to come forward with assistance.

Please contact:

Md. Shamsuddoha,
Senior Coordinator –
Coastal Livelihood
Security and Advocacy
Mobile: 880-171881645

COAST Trust
Dhaka Liaison Office
House # 9/4, Raod # 2,
Shaymoli, Dhaka-1207,
coasttst@citechco.net
coasttrust@seriousbb.net
Phone: 880-2-8125181,
Fax: 880-2-9129395,

Sayed Aminul Haque
Senior Coordinor –
Operation
Mobile: 0171-831789

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury
Executive Director
Mobile: 880171-529792

COAST Trust
Central Office
Upazila: Charfassion,
District: Bhola,
Mobile: 880-1713450983

Case 2

Beuty's dream for a simple home



Beuty Begum is a member of COAST group. She is standing on her lost homestead. She lost her husband four years ago, she was earning out of making mat. Just two weeks ago, she lost her homestead due to the floods now she made her house out of coconut and other leafs. She was facing hardship, even to manage two meals for her children; her dream is so simple, she just wants two meals for her 3 children and a permanent home.