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Impact of flash flood'17 on livelihood and food habit of haor dwellers in northeast Bangladesh: BRAC's support to reduce vulnerability

Nepal C Dey, Ratnajit Saha, Mahmood Parvez, Raihanul Islam, Polin Saha, Sifat Rabb, Kaniz Ferdouse, Mahfuzar Rahman, Akramul Islam, Shyam Saha, Anna Minj and **Abdul Bayes**
BRAC, Bangladesh

The recent flash flood in April 2017 in the northeast region, triggered by heavy rainfall, has breached parts of embankments and resulted in huge loss of asset and income of haor dwellers. The flood has not only damaged boro crop, which is the only seasonal rice crop that farmers grow annually, but also has affected the overall livelihoods of haor dwellers. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of flash flood'17 on livelihood including food habit of haor dwellers. One of the study objectives was to understand the effectiveness of government as well as BRAC's support during flood. The study covered 62 villages of 31 unions under 6 districts with a total of 1845 households. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in the study. Results show that household heads who were employed with agricultural activities before the flood (52%) became unemployed (21%) after the flood. Respondents reported that they changed their usual food habits, roughly one-third of households consumed two instead of three meals per day, 53% adapted consuming to less food and 16% had low nutritious food due to the scarcity of food. The lack of money and loss of main boro crop were the main contributing factors of crisis for haor dwellers. To reduce the vulnerability and improve livelihood of the victims, 47% and 28% of the victims received support from BRAC and Government emergency responses respectively within three weeks of flood. This depicted that BRAC's emergency response mechanism to the affected population was relatively more efficient and faster in a humanitarian crisis like flood. Ensuring availability of nutritious food for the affected population to escape from stunting due to inadequacy of food intake for many days after the flood should be ensured. As livelihood with agricultural activities were being affected most of the years, alternative employment opportunities, such as skills development training for youth, e.g. driving, electrical, tailoring and garments, poultry and livestock would serve as effective options for reducing vulnerability and improving their livelihoods in future.

Biography

Nepal C Dey has completed his PhD from Tottori University, Japan after completion of MSc in Water Resources Engineering from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka. He is the Senior Research Fellow of Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC, a premier #1 NGO in the world. He has relatively a long experience in research, teaching and consultancy on water and environmental issues with public, private and UN organizations. He is Professional in Water Resources Engineering. He has published more than 50 papers in reputed journals and book chapters and has been serving as an Editorial Board Member of repute. His research interest includes: remote sensing in environment and sustainability of water resources.

nepal.cd@brac.net

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