SHOUHARDO III Monthly News - Char Region

Responding at the community level:

SHOUHARDO III participants coming together to help the needy

Amidst the pandemic situation, the communities are approaching to stand by the people who need assistance the most. SHOUHARDO III communities’ assistance is highly appreciated in the remote and isolated areas where government and non-government organizations hardly reach with relief support. The Falguni Savings Group of Char Horichandi village of Fulchari Upazila under Gaibandha distributing ration among the most distressed villagers.

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A Savings Group of Chartari village distributing ration among the most distressed villagers.

Jesmin Begum, the chairman of the VSLA group expressed, "We, the SHOUHARDO participants, took our shares from our own savings which the program highly supported during this pandemic. It feels really good when someone assists you at the time of need. So, we just tried to help the poorest with whatever we could."

The VSLA management committee collected BDT 1,500 from the well-off villagers and BDT 1,750 from the VSLA members as a contribution to distribute a relief package of 2 kg rice, 500-gram lentils, and 500-gram salt for the 25 poorest households in the village.

Another VSLA group consisted of 23 members of Chartari village under Sundarganj upazila of the same district also extended their assistance to six distressed families with their savings of BDT 1,000 in their welfare fund and collection of BDT 300 from other villagers. They provided a package of 3 kg rice, ½ kg onion, 1 piece of soap, and ½ liter oil. One of the recipient shared, "The well-off can easily assist us, but, it means a lot when people like us help each other with what they have."

Double disasters with floods affecting communities in northern Bangladesh

Kurigram, Gaibandha, Jamalpur and Sirajganj, all four covered districts of SHOUHARDO III in the char areas have been affected by the annual flooding. Monsoon rain and water from the upstream source have caused a rise in water levels of rivers and caused slow onset flooding in the low lying areas in the northern part of the country.

As of June 30, 2020 the following damage of lives, assets and livelihoods of the people in the SHOUHARDO III working areas have been reported.
Around 4,816 hectares of crop land have been inundated in Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Kurigram and Jamalpur.

Total 17 ponds, 13 in Gaibandha & four in Jamalpur have been washed out.

In Gaibandha, 155 houses have been damaged fully and 10,800 houses have been damaged partially.

Around 900 homestead vegetables production garden have been damaged in Islampur and Bakshiganj Upazila under Jamalpur district.

Four community clinics have been closed in Nageshwari Upazila in Kurigram district.

11 houses have been washed away due to river erosion in Belkuchi and Chouhali upazila under Sirajganj district.

Rostom, a resident of Uttar Khatiamari village of Fazlupur Union under Fulchhari Upazilla said, "We cultivated jute in 49 decimals (0.20 hectares) of land. The sudden flood has washed away our jutes. We cannot understand how we will recover the losses."

SHOUHARDO III flood recovery response program funded by USAID catered to the need of 1,744 flood affected households from seven Upazilas in 2019 by raising their household plinths. This activity resulted in sustainable support during floods. This is not only benefiting the homeowners but also the neighbors living in the adjacent areas. People are taking shelter in the raised households during this difficult time.

"Never before I could stay at my home during floods, I had to take shelter elsewhere. This year, many of my relatives and neighbors have taken shelter at my place," uttered Monowara whose house received a plinth raising by the program.

Shafiqul Islam from Madoner Char village under Char Rajibpur in Kurigram shared, "Noor Nobi is my neighbor whose homestead was raised by the assistance of SHOUHARDO III program. My house is already under water. My family along with three other families have taken shelter on Noor Nobi’s yard. I wish, I could raise mine."

On June 27, 2020, the water level of Jamuna River across Tengrakandi village under Fulchari Upazila, Gaibandha, started flowing above the danger level. The water and currents damaged most roadways that severely hampered around 1,200 people’s mobility. To solve the issue at hand, Sabled Ali, the president of the Village Development Committee (VDC), together with a few local youths collected BDT 2,500 and 30 pieces of bamboo from the local upper and middle class people. Utilizing the materials, 25 community people including VDC members came together to make a 40-feet long bamboo bridge. People including women and girls can now go to the market and other places. Moreover, the community-led activity has made the residents, especially the youth, confident that united, anything can be achieved.