

Jamuna Char Integrated Development Project

Date : August 18, 1996

To
The Inspection Panel
1818 H St.
N.W. Washington, D.C 20433
U.S.A

Dear Sir,

It is for your information that World Bank is one of the co-financiers of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project in Bangladesh. The Bridge Project is exerting and will continue to let loose detrimental effect on the lives and livelihood of the char people. The Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge Authority (JMBA) did not take into consideration vital issues associated with the existence of the char people. Failing to achieve any positive reaction either from the JMBA or the local resident mission of the world Bank, we, according to the system of the World Bank seek to register our Request for Inspection on the issues to the Panel of Inspection of the World Bank.

Accordingly we are submitting herewith the necessary documents as prescribed by the World Bank for your sincere consideration.

Please let us know if any further detail is required in this regard.

Yours



Majibul Huq Dulu
Director
JCDP

SUBMISSION TO INSPECTION PANEL

A REQUEST FOR INSPECTION ON THE EFFECT OF

JAMUNA MULTI-PURPOSE BRIDGE

ON THE JAMUNA CHAR INHABITANTS

Submitted by :

Jamuna Char Integrated Development Project (JCDP)

For and on behalf of the Jamuna Char Dwellers

Date : 18th August, 1996. Dhaka, Bangladesh

**TO : THE INSPECTION PANEL : 1818 H. St
N.W. Washington, D.C 204 33, USA**

We, Jamuna Char Integrated Development Project (JCDP) and other persons whose names and address are attached live / represent others, living in the area known Jamuna char region claim the following :

1. The Bank is Financing (and Playing the Role as Coordinating Body for the Construction of JMB) / Appraisal of a Project [Name and Brief Discussion]

The Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge is a much- talked- about project which has been endorsed by the GoB as a priority project and co-financed by the World Bank. This is, perhaps, the first national project of its kind for which people had to sacrifice their hard-earned money as levy and taxes. Since 1984 government began to negotiate with the international donor community for the construction of this bridge. A series of feasibility studies had been carried out by different international agencies. All those studies were aimed at drawing up a comprehensive plan for the bridge.

The first study was launched in 1986. Netherlands Engineering Consultants (NEDECO), Rendel, Palmer and Triton Ltd. and Bangladesh Consultants Limited were jointly commissioned to carry out the study on the feasibility of construction of a multi-purpose bridge on the river Jamuna. Later on several other studies were carried out in order to determine characteristics and configuration of the bridge. Specifically the phase-I study was requested by UNDP and World Bank. The main objective of the phase-I study was to identify the suitable location for the bridge construction. After having analyzed, using multiple social and physiographical criterion, a corridor just below Sirajgonj was finally selected as the most appropriate place for the construction of the bridge. In May 1987, with UNDP funding, the same agencies were again contracted to carry out the phase-II study. The components of Phase-II study include traffic projections, cost benefit analysis, technical aspects, geo-technical issues, physical modeling and above all the economic feasibility of the proposed bridge. After the completion of the phase-II study, a draft feasibility report consisting of a main report and ten annexes was issued in April 1988.

Discussion on the draft feasibility report had begun in June 1988. Donors, GoB and experts discussed the various issues of the feasibility report. Those meetings were attended among others by the representatives of the World Bank, UNDP, GoB, JMBA (now named as JMBD), ADB, OECF of Japan, ODA, Canadian High Commission and other international agencies. The meeting came up with the conclusion to instruct the consultants to proceed with the preparation of the bidding documents on the basis of an integrated road-rail bridge. Subsequently, World Bank confirmed to the consultants through a fax, dated July 7, 1988 enclosing a copy of Aide Memorie dated June 27, 1988.

In these meetings and afterwards the donors and the consultants stressed on the need of Additional Economic Feasibility Study (AEFS). In 1989, the consultants submitted the draft report containing the earlier work reported in April 1988 and AEFS. In February 1988 the decision was made to carry out other related studies like the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Before the beginning

Available records indicate that a preliminary feasibility study was conducted in 1971 on a fixed crossing over the river Jamuna. Possibly that was the first initiative undertaken in respect of a proposed bridge over the river Jamuna. Later, in 1976, another study was conducted by Japan International Cooperation Agency. In the following years the east-west inter-connecting grid was constructed for transfer of electricity. Subsequently a feasibility study was conducted in 1992 on gas supply system across the river to the western part of the country including option for road and energy bridge. All these events added impetus to the proposition of a multi-purpose bridge over Jamuna. Particularly, since 1984, the project stayed at the priority list of the Government of Bangladesh. To operationalize the idea initially a body styled as Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge Authority (JMBA) was formed which was later elevated to the status of a division. JMBA commissioned a number of studies to look into the diverse aspects of the project. On the basis of the recommendations drawn by those studies, the construction work has started.

Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge : Components

It has been decided that the proposed bridge will be located about 8 km downstream of the existing ferry *ghat* near Bhuapur. The connecting point at the western zone will be Saidabad, a few km. downstream from the Serajgonj ferry *ghat*. The energy transfer to the West would be achieved by means of the second electricity inter- connector and a gas pipeline over the bridge. Thus the proposed bridge construction involves a wide array of works: the main bridge, bridge end facilities, approach roads, river training & closure of the western intake of the Dhaleswari river. (Rendel Palmer & Tritton, NEDECO and BCL, Jamuna Bridge Project, Phase II, Study Feasibility Report, Volume VIII. 1984).

The Jamuna bridge Multi-purpose Bridge project includes the construction of:

- the main bridge
- the Bridge end facilities at the east and west banks of the Jamuna river
- the approach roads connecting the bridge with the existing road network
- the river training works

The main bridge is expected to be a multi-span girder-type structure with 100 m spans and a total length of 4.800 m. The main bridge will have pile foundation consisting of 90 m long steel tubular piles driven into riverbed by piling hammers on floating crane barges. The superstructure of the bridge is proposed to consist of steel box girders with a concrete deck or pre-stressed concrete box girders.

The bridge end facilities of both sides of the bridge will be located on reclaimed land within the existing Jamuna flood plain and will contain facilities for proper operation and maintenance of the bridge. These end facilities are expected to enhance smooth traffic flow , provide travelers aids, have bus stations, parking areas, rest areas, toll booths, staff housings etc. The total length of the two bridge end facilities will be about 6000m.

The approach roads will have a total length of approximately 22 km. In the East, the approach road will be connected to the existing Tangail-Madhupur road near Elenga and in the West, it will join the Hatikamrul-Sirajgonj road at new Nalka bridge.

The project site is in central Bangladesh about 300 km up river from the Bay of Bengal. On site delivery of the construction materials, machinery and heavy bridge components by road or rail will be expensive. Thus, the suitable mode of transportation of these equipment and materials directly to the site is through river channel of sufficient width and depth for safe and timely passage of the delivery barges. At the project site where the bridge will cross the chars a channel has to be dredged to provide access of floating cranes required for pile driving and installation of complete bridge units.

River training works (RTW) will be necessary in order to prevent outflanking of the channels and to construct the bridge end facilities as explained by the Bridge Authority. The RTW will be constructed on the flood plains or on char land. The crest of the RTW will be raised above the design flood level while the toe at the river side will be extended down to the maximum expected scour depth. The currents and wave action exert enormous erosive force on the slopes. In order to prevent erosion of the slopes and protect the river banks concrete block mattresses will be constructed or rocks will be dumped. The total area needing protection is close to one million square meters. In order to facilitate the RTW extensive dredging works will be needed.

The existing ground level has to be raised approximately by 5 m. in order to construct flood free approach roads and bridge end facilities, The dredged materials that become available when constructing the river training works will be used for this purpose and will be discharged directly by the dredger into the area of the future bridge end facilities by hydraulic fill method. The total quantity of materials dredged will far exceed the total quantity required for construction inside the flood plains. Whether the excess dredged sand will be discharged to the site of the approach roads outside the flood plains directly or be stockpiled near the bridge end facilities and delivered in dry condition has not yet been decided. Borrow filling by the excess dredged material alongside the road has also been considered as an alternative.

Prior to the above major construction activities a flood free area will be reclaimed with dredged materials on the east bund bordering the future bridge end facilities. Majority of the construction activities will be carried out along with the construction of the labor camps in this area.

These major construction works will have construction related environmental impacts. These impacts will be of temporary nature and are expected to cease with completion of the construction work of the bridge. However, some of the impacts may be quite significant and can be very serious if not properly managed during project planning and implementation and can cause severe damage to environmental resources.

The Components : Focal Points

At different phases of feasibility study the donor and the panel of experts have suggested the following recommendations regarding the components of bridge :

- The incremental cost analysis showed that the most beneficial configuration would be two lane road bridge initially but the expansion to four lanes would be justified in the medium term.
- Considerable cost savings would be obtained by carrying gas or electricity transfers across the bridge as compared with independent river crossings. Provision should, therefore, be made for such transfers on the bridge although it was likely that gas and electricity would be naturally exclusive in the initial years.
- The meter gauge (MG) rail option was found to be the most attractive of the rail alternatives.
- Establishment of gas and electric power interconnects.
- River training.
- Bridge end road construction (Approach road).

2. We understand that the Bank has the following policies and / or procedures

Operational Directive 4.30: Involuntary Resettlement has elucidated the guiding principles.

Involuntary Resettlement, OD 430 in the new Operational Manual. The previous guidelines were contained in OMS 233, *social Issues Associated with Involuntary Resettlement in Bank-Financed Projects*, and OPN 10.08, *Operations Issues in the Treatment of Involuntary Resettlement in Bank Financed Project*. Both may now be discarded. More detailed information is in *Involuntary Resettlement in Development Projects*, World Bank Technical Paper No. 80 (Washington, D.C: The World Bank, 1988), and in *Involuntary Resettlement in Bank Assisted Projects, An Introduction to Legal Issues* (Washington, D.C: The World Bank, 1988).

The directive broadens the treatment of resettlement issues beyond hydropower and irrigation projects to all types of investment operations. It emphasizes the need for :

- a. minimizing involuntary resettlement {para. 3(a)};
- b. providing people displaced by a project with the means to improve, or at least restore, their former living standards, earning capacity, and production levels {para. 3(b)};
- c. involving both resettlers and hosts in resettlement activities {(paras. 3c)-(d) and 7-10)};
- d. a time-bound resettlement plan (paras. 4-5 and 30); and
- e. valuation and compensation principles for land and other assets affected by the project (para. 14-16).

3. Our Rights / Interests

That it is submitted that the constitution of Bangladesh guarantees the right of property for its citizen provided in Article 42.(1) that "Subject to any restrictions imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalized and requisitioned save by authority of law. Clause 2 of the same article describes that "A law made under clause (1) shall provide for the acquisition, nationalization or requisition with compensation and shall either fix the amount of compensation or specify the principles on which, and the manner in which, the compensation is to be assessed and paid, but no such law shall be called in question in any court on the ground that any provision in respect of such compensation is not adequate.

The rise in the water level in Jamuna river will displace thousands of people from their forefathers' land. This is the direct violation of the fundamental right of the people, especially when there is no scheme to compensate for the loss of land and consequent eviction.

In accordance with the envisaged principles as laid down in the constitution and as translated this right into other laws and as such violation the legal and fundamental rights of the char people demand immediate attention, who are faced with the detrimental effect of bridge construction, are they eligible to receive compensation and have the right to resort to court. The people whose lands have been submerged due to the construction have not been incorporated in the mitigation plan. Even the people of the acquired land have not received proper compensation yet, in many cases. That is further submitted that the Article 15 of the constitution describes the basic rights of the people.

Any act or effect impairing or jeopardizing the basic rights of the people is likely to be taken care of immediately. The people have the right to survive and to earn their livelihood in a congenial atmosphere. The inundation of the agricultural land and homestead, intensified scouring in the char, the increased water level in the river Jamuna as result of the closure of the northern intake of the Dhaleswari and above all, the changes in the river morphology will substantially be detrimental to the char dwellers and consequently these people would be plunged into a situation of being evicted from their ancestors' land.

This clearly indicates as to how the right of the char dwellers is being ignored. Furthermore, it is notable that the Land Reforms Ordinance, 1987 section-6 describes that No eviction, etc. from homestead, "Any land used as a homestead by its owner in the rural area shall be exempted from all legal process, including seizure, distress, attachment or sale by any officer, court or any other authority and the owner of such land shall not be divested or dispossessed of the land or evicted therefrom by any means: provided that nothing in this section shall apply to the acquisition of such homestead under any law".

“Evicted therefrom by any means : provided that nothing in this section shall apply to the acquisition of such homestead under any law” is meant for any actions or the after-effect of the actions, attributing to or tends to attribute, appear to be counterproductive or seems to be counterproductive to the survival of the people as well as force people to leave their homestead. This is one of the fundamental rights of the people which has been strengthened and legitimized through law. This interest is fraught with various factors stemming from the activities, being carried out by Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge Division. The responsibilities of different parties involved in this project are well-defined in the contract documents and outlined in the project appraisal reports. We are observing with deep concern that the parameters and perspectives used in ascertaining the number of population to be affected is based on the shallow understanding of the gravity of the problem. The hydrological table and predictions made in this connection portray a dismal situation for the people inhabiting the char lands. *The land records annexed herewith are ample evidences of the people’s lawful entitlement of those land.* This could be referred as one of those vital projects lacking the participation of the people, in any form. However, we request inspection panel to come forward to investigate the matters. The quantification mechanism has sheerly denied the losses and damages incurred to the char people. Now the main concern of the people is to secure their right to live on their homestead.

The principles described in the state acquisition Act also defines the limit of the citizens right, so far the eviction is concerned. The State acquisition And Tenancy Act, 1950 (as modified up to date), section 83 spells out “A *raiyyat* shall have the right to occupy and use the land comprised in his holding in any manner he likes”. In the event of Infringement of this right by the act of any individual or authority for any actions which are not immuned by any other law of the land, the aggrieved persons are entitled to get relief under the Law called “Specific Relief Act. The ordinance promulgated for the implementation of different development project often don’t cover all the aggrieved persons.

The Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge Authority Ordinance 1985 (Ordinance No xxxiv. of 1985) section 7 describes “Functions of the Authority : subject to general direction, supervision and control of the government, the functions of the authority shall be to -

Prepare a comprehensive plan for the establishment of the multi-purpose bridge for consideration and approval of the government.

The destruction of the char shows clearly that the bridge authority has not devised a comprehensive plan for the construction of the bridge.

Section 9(1) : Acquisition of land -(1) Any land required by the Authority for carrying out the purpose of this Ordinance shall be deemed to be needed for a public purpose and such land may be requisitioned or acquired according to the requirements of the Authority.

Section 10 (2) : (a) Cause studies, surveys, experiments and technical researches to be made or contribute towards the cost of any such studies experiments or technical researches made by any other person at the request of the Authority.

(e) Seek and obtain advice and assistance for any purpose relating to the Multi-purpose bridge from any local authority of Government agency and such local authority or government agency shall give advice and assistance sought by the Authority to the best of its ability, knowledge and judgment and the expenditure, if any, involved in such advice or assistance shall be borne by the authority.

Section 11(2) : The Authority shall pay compensation to such persons as may be affected by the prohibition under sub-section (1) in such manner and at such rate may be prescribed.

Section 12(2) : The Authority shall pay compensation if the damage, if any, caused to the land on account of any action under sub-section (1) at such rate and in such manner as may be prescribed.

In the light of the above mentioned sections we can draw the following conclusion : The land acquisition is not the problem for the vast majority of the char people. People expressed their worry about erosion and distraction of char. The compensation package developed by JMBA only includes the people whose land will be acquired for the construction of the bridge. It does not deal with the char people as their lands have not been acquired.

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) of Jamuna Bridge has not followed the sequence and synchronization of the events necessary for EIA. It was mostly based on the secondary data. We only find the existence of the charland while the questions relating to wildlife action plan and fisheries mitigation plan come up. One of the basic perimeters of EIA is to ensure the participation of the people. The project is lacking the participation of the people. So, the existence and the interest of the char people have not been reflected in the EIA and subsequent mitigation plan devised on the basis of EIA.

4. The Bank has Violated its Own Policies / Procedures in this Way:

Any operation that involves *land acquisition* or screened as *Category A or B project* or *environmental assessment purposes* should be reviewed for potentials resettlement requirements early in the project cycle. (OD. 430)

The steps undertaken by the bank to ascertain the resettlement potentials only dealt with the people whose land have been acquired but did not consider the thousands of people who would be evicted from their land as consequence of the construction of the bridge system and will be turned into environmental refugee.

Therefore, we claim to undertake a through investigation into the matter and urge upon the inspection panel to look comprehensively in to the resettlement issues. The Bank, at the early project cycle did not include the char people in its resettlement plan. [Revised Resettlement Action Plan JMBA, Resettlement Unit]

The Bank has clearly violated its own *Involuntary Resettlement Directives*. The directive has clearly outlined the right of the project affected people. "Where displacement is unavoidable, resettlement plan should be developed" (OD. 430). Involuntary resettlement without compensation and mitigation plan is discouraged by the bank. But the bank has not taken into account the potential threat of the displacement of the char people.

In the introduction of **Operational Directive on the Involuntary Resettlement** the Bank describes “development projects that displace people involuntarily generally give rise to severe economic, social and environmental problems : production systems are dismantled, productive assets and income sources are lost, people are located to environments where their productive skill may be less applicable and the competition for resources greater; community structures and social networks are weakened, kin groups are dispersed and cultural identity, traditional authority, and the **potential for mutual help are diminished. Involuntary resettlement may cause severe long-term hardship**”.

In the policy objectives of Involuntary Resettlement Directives, Bank has described that the Bank’s resettlement policy is to ensure that the population displaced by a project receives benefits from it involuntarily.

The construction of the bridge has been a constant threat to the human habitation. Following examples will shed light on the people’s vision and the perspective concerning the bridge’s effects on the habitation. During participatory discussion the people of Boro pauri had taken a critical look to the bridge. People are aware that the bridge, when completed, would cause problems for them in future. The first and foremost is the fact that the char would not exist at all. They know it very well that they would confront all sorts of trouble in life. They would lose their homes, their lands, right to fishing, and be forced to relocate to a different place. That is why they need to be compensated adequately. The matter should be brought to the notice of the appropriate authorities urgently.

In **Dorota** during discussion more than one participant said that the *char* would not exist as a result of building the bridge, and that there was no way they continued living there. They would lose their cattle, plants and, above all, the very opportunity to cultivate. Other people such as fishermen, boatmen etc. would find themselves helpless, because already, they have lost the right to fish near the bridge site as per instructions issued by the Jamuna Bridge Authority. But no measure has been taken to compensate for their loss of livelihood.

During discussion on the impact of the bridge the people of **Boro koiri** said that closure of two tributaries in the Saidabad area would cause a rise in water level, which would mean their houses and lands would go under water.

Turning to the impact of the Jamuna Bridge Project, the people of **Gobindapur** said that once completed, it could seriously affect them. They said that a reduced width of the river, from 7-8 miles down to 3-4 miles, would cause greater overflow of the water during monsoon. They pointed out that water would flow down the channels of Louhajang, Dhaleswari, Saidabad and Katakali during floods, but now, with the narrowing or closing of these channels, water would overflow tremendously. “Another reason is”, as one of the participants put it, “there will be dams (guide bunds) on both sides of the Jamuna, and those of us living in *chars* and falling outside the dam area will just go under water. People in our vast area will lose the opportunity to cultivate and raise their cattle”.

In **Chandgonj** the participants said that the guide bunds being built on both sides of the Jamuna would do most of the damage for the *char* people. The water level would increase by 3-4 feet, which would cause an overflow because of a much narrower river channel that would be the Jamuna with the bridge in place accompanied by the bunds.

Buzzed with the happy feeling that the resettlement planning have got on, the JMBA, quite interestingly, in its Environmental Management Action Plan provides for the following only :

- JMBA and DoF have estimated about 5,650 fisherfolk would be directly affected by the JMBP of which about 25 % numbering approximately 1400 would be a full-time professional fisherfolk.
- From the social benefit standpoint ponds available should be adequate to compensate about 3200 PAPs in the impact area.
- The closure of northern intake of Dhaleswari river will exert a significant impact on the upper Dhaleswari basin having an area of about 7,00 KM/sq. a total of about 250 families are expected to be affected by the closure of the northern intake of Dhaleswari
- An estimate shows that the homesteads of 2166 households will be acquired by JMBA for JMBP.
- An estimated 2166 will loss their homestead with trees.
- Another estimated ten thousand household who have lost their agricultural land or otherwise affected will be provided with six saplings with manure and fertilizer.

While asked how they came to know about the existence of Jamuna bridge an overwhelming 74% of the respondents (1150) said there had been no official attempt to inform them about the plans undertaken by the authority having direct impact on their lives and livelihood. They came across the issues only through hear-say. This is how one can easily assess the reluctance of the authority to take into consideration the “people” and the society as well. Consequently “a resettlement site, about three Km. north of east bridge end is being developed to accommodate 20% of the 2166 households displaced from their homestead”. While the seventy five *chars* within ten Km. of the bridge site alone has a population of 76,000 persons distributed over 13,000 households. Not to mention, the Jamuna river shelters more than half a million people in its island chars only.

Displaced Production Systems

Integral to the resettlement action plan the restoration of the displaced production is one of the fundamental agenda for the improvement of the socio-economic condition of the people. How world bank look at the social issues is mirrored in its **Resettlement and Development Report (1994)**. It describes “when people are displaced production system are dismantled”.

The study has focused on the possibility of the destruction of the production system. The existing chars will be washed away. Already sixteen chars underwent severe erosion. The people are living in a bewildering situation. The agricultural tend is being devoured by the struck of inundation. *Cheena* (a small variety of paddy grains), wheat, ground nuts are principal crops in the char areas. The people of **Boro Peari** said if the *char* did not exist, they would lose everything, all sources of earning a living -- agriculture or fishing. They said that health care and education would be a nagging problem for them.

In **Dorota** wheat, sugarcane, *cheena*, sweet potato are main crops that the sandy land permits them to cultivate.

In **Chandgonj** much of their land in part had gone under water in recent times. The eastern part, Rulipara and the western Jungipur the land gives substantial agricultural production. Rice, jute, wheat, brinjal, potato, chili etc are main the crops of this area.

The *char* **Alipur** is rich in agriculture, with plenty of trees. There are roads, schools, madrasahs, shops, market places and mosques. This *char* is in fact a part of the mainland, but the Dhaleswari river has made it look like a *char*. Agricultural production has also been disrupted in this area due to unusual increase in water.

Panchasona is a permanent *char* in the heart of the Jamuna, which only gets submerged during floods but does not erode. But now, with the dredging of a new channel as a component of the bridge project, the vast *char* with an area of 50 square miles has been divided into two.

Kinship Group and Destruction of Informal Social Network

Resettlement and Development Report (1994) produced by World Bank states that the kinship groups are scattered and informal social networks that are part of daily subsistence systems - providing mutual help in child care, food security, revenue transfer, short-term credit, labor exchange and other basic sources of socio-economic support are dissolved.

Destruction of the social support system would inevitably bring disaster in the lives of the people. Agriculture, household based craft activities are being run on the basis of the kinship relation. Considering the notion of dependency of the people, through which their survival mechanism get impetus, we can easily draw conclusion that the destruction of kinship group and informal social networks would result in deterioration of health, revenue transfer, disaster management etc. This is unique for the *char* areas that the people can not withstand the stress events caused by erosion and flood without being dependent on the kinship and social relations. Disarticulation of this kind of relationship would entail disaster upon the people. The community health support system would be wiped out. In the rural setting of Bangladesh, mid-wives-hailed from the *char* areas provide enormous support to the women. One of the most devastating effect of the destruction of the kinship relations would be the crisis generating out of heterogeneous composition of the people in a new area. The people, in the *char* regions had to shift their homestead several times in a year. The identity of the people lies with the previous villages. Decision concerning migration are dependent on the kinship network primarily. How World Bank will quantify the value of the destruction of the society. Exchange of labor is one of the major aspects among different kinship groups which help them overcome the lean period, disaster etc. During October-November (Ashwin-Kartik) the *char* people face food shortage. Among the many possible alternatives, dependence on the neighbors and the kins is deemed as a part of immediate survival.

The slum like houses in the resettlement areas had not been accepted by the people. JMBA, especially in its EMAP "A resettlement site, about 3 km. north of east bridge end shown in is being developed to accommodate 20% of the 2166 households displaced from their homestead. ... the plan shows that the resettlement site will be developed in urban density in a rural setting. In the absence of adequate environmental consideration it will turn into an urban slum having an environmental quality inferior to that they enjoyed in their previous homestead".

The absence of the environmental considerations have never been eradicated and it is not only the “environmental quality” that is inferior but the whole quality of life is degraded in the resettlement plan. The degradation of life is no more a theoretical proposition, it is quite evident and comprehensible.

“JAMUNA BRIDGE AUTHORITIES IN A FLIX: Affected People Unwilling to Move to Rehabilitation Site Nazmul Ashraf of the Daily Star reports back from Bhupur”.

Jamuna Multi-purpose bridge is being hindered due to unwillingness of most of the project affected persons (PAPs) to live at the resettlement site. The PAPs accustomed with lifestyle in char areas of rural Bangladesh are finding it unsuitable to reside in the JMBA-arranged urban-style residential areas where small plots have been offered to the PAPs. Amirunessa, a house-wife of one of the three families residing at rehabilitation site, told this correspondent they were feeling insecure and isolated since they now did not have any neighbors unlike where they lived earlier. This correspondent talked to a cross-section of people including those affected and gathered that the inhabitants of the *char* areas were disliking the idea of living at the resettlement site because they thought they would lose life style they were accustomed to since long. Besides, they were not sure about the type of social bondage to be built up in a society where people from different localities and occupations and varying backgrounds would be living together”.

During our investigation it was found that 45 per cent of people had clearly expressed their worry concerning the social disintegration as an inevitable outcome of the after-effects of bridge construction.

Deterioration in Food Security and Destruction of the Agricultural System

It has been explained by the Bank that “People’s lives are affected in very painful ways. Many jobs and assets are lost.” due to involuntary resettlement. As consequence of the bridge construction there is no doubt that the vast tract of paddy, kaon, ground nut and water melon fields will be submerged and the lands will be submerged under water. In many reports it has been described that the char areas are the source of water melon, ground-nut and other agricultural products. Though the spiral of the grueling poverty impair the lives, but at least once every year, good days smile upon them once for a while when they harvest ***The attached data sheet will provide a clear picture of agriculture in the char areas..***

The people, speaking on the impact of Jamuna bridge apprehend that the acute food crisis will create dismay among them. The *chars* are fertile and the farmers cultivate various kinds of vegetables and grains. The sense of loss of the people has been multiplied as the many chars get submerged by the surging waters of the river. During investigation attempts have been made to ascertain the level and extent of the destruction of the food security system. It is true that the migration from ancestors’ land to other places will have considerable impacts on the potentials of developing the food security system. Moreover, the cropping pattern, particularly practiced in the char areas, is different from that of the mainland people. During discussion people emphasized on the protection of the food security system. They said if we were displaced we would lose the land to cultivate- leading to the destruction of our food security system. It is an earnest need to pay attention to this factor.

5. We Believe our Rights/Interests Have Been / are Likely to be Adversely Affected as a Direct Result of the Bank's Violation. This is, or Likely to Cause us to Suffer.

Before delving into the matters relating to sufferings and miseries of the char people, we would like to focus on the following : "Apart from the RIVMOR computation carried out to predict constrictions scour and back water effects near Jamuna Bridge (Phase-I, final report, appendix C-5.3), some additional situations were computed. For one schemitization of main channel and flood plain, two different bridge lengths were taken. The result relating to scour and back water depth were compared in Appendix -B-5.3 In analyzing the appendix mentioned in the above it is clear that the existing char lands will be seriously affected by the strong currents due to constructional effects of the bridge system".

In appendix B-5.4 (phase -1, final report) the resistance to flow of the Jamuna river during flood condition is discussed. this is important as far as the backwater effect is concerned. The sediment transport rate determines the scale of morphological process and thereby important for constriction scour.

In order to assess the effect of bridge length on the constriction scour and back water, computation was carried out for two bridge lengths with the same schemitization of main channel and flood plain (char).

Considering the boundary conditions with the upstream and downstream respectively a maximum rise of water level of 3 meter and normal depth, we can conclude that the rising tendency of water will affect seriously the char lands. In case of numerical instability the four cases were studied to predict the worst condition scour, that may occur in one of the stages. The discharge increases from 40,000 m³/s, which is about bankful, to 91,000 m³/s which is the 1:100 year discharge in 14.5 days. This corresponds approximately with the rise of water level of 3m in 10 days. This was the maximum level of water observed in the hydrographs. From the present condition it is concluded that a river constriction which includes a reduction in the main channel leads to considerable more constriction scour. Back water effects which will also affect on the char people not only by reducing the char width out by eroding the chars. Here the integral part of each pier of the bridge will be dominating on the reduction of the river width.

In contrast to the predictions of the feasibility study the recent facts and press information the erosion and scouring have developed leading to a heavy economic losses evident from the current year's scouring and erosion phenomenon. This phenomena allows us to consider the prediction of the feasibility studies in this connection as over enthusiastic. The following example shed light into the alarming developments in the bridge site:

"The under construction west guide embankment of the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge has suffered another collapse. In April 11, during the dredging operation 70 meters of the embankment at the south end collapsed within 3 hours and disappeared into the river. The Bridge authority will suffer major financial loss due to this second "slope failure" in a span of three months time. The leading experts of the country are of opinion that the river training of a very active river like Jamuna Bridge has not been done in appropriate method and the whole nation will have to bear the responsibility of the irresponsible decision of the government.

The news of collapse has already been communicated through fax to donor agencies, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, local and central office of OECF of Japan. Besides, the management consultant, panel of experts and London office of construction supervision consultant have been informed about the incidence. The Bridge authority has asked CSC to bring the designer in Bangladesh. The CSC project directorate is also asked to visit Bangladesh”.

Back in 1994 Bhorer kagoj (Morning Paper) reported “that the Jamuna Bridge Project: Site selected for guide embankment disappeared in river. The source informed that site for guide embankment on both banks were selected. But 718 acres of land of site for guide embankment on the east bank in the Tangail district disappeared into river and as a result 352 acres of new land has been acquired again. However, additional land is required for the east bank guide embankment. So the previously selected site for guide embankment has to be changed”.

Following is the synopsis of the news item published in the ITTEFAQ, the largest circulation Bengali national daily. It describes the situation of the area, including the areas under our study.

SIRAJGANJ; May 19, Hundreds of homesteads were washed away into the river as the surging waves of the Jamuna invaded into 11 villages of the char. At least five other chars are under threat from the heavy current and whirlwind in the river. People from about 400 homesteads were homeless in the villages of Chundni, Madhurabari, Boro Peari, Chhoto Peari, Hari Bhanga and Dorota under the district of Sirajgonj.

In Bhuapur sub-district of the Tangail district, on the eastern bank of the Jamuna, the chars namely Panchagacchi, Haolbhanga, Baniagati, char Baintain and Belua lost half of their lands. More than 400 families were on the verge of losing their homes.

The latest spate of erosion which began four days ago, at least 30 villages -- both on the char and the mainland -- under three sub-districts of Sirajgonj perished into the Jamuna.

Local people said digging of a new channel to divert the Jamuna current and construction of embankments along both banks of the river caused a rise in water level. The overflowing water, backed by the strong current, did the destruction of the char villages.

The channel was created to facilitate the on-going work of the multi-purpose bridge across the mighty river.

About 2,750 people, including women and children, from the 11 char villages moved out to different directions for shelter. They demand that the authorities set up camps to refuge the victims.

These people, rendered homeless because of the bridge project, also demand compensation from the government.

The Jamuna suddenly began swelling since Thursday last after heavy rains. Bangladesh Water Development Board sources said the situation was getting worse because of the strong current and whirlwind despite a slight decrease in the water level on Sunday.

The overflowing Jamuna water has devoured the alternate road approaching the Bhuapur ferry point, suspending Sirajganj to Bhuapur ferry system.

The above discussion illustrate that the bark has not taken into consideration the right of the char dwellers. The involuntary, resettlement para (2), (3) a,b,c,d,e (4) have been violated.

The Level and Extent of the Damage

The human and social factors emanating from the ongoing Jamuna Bridge construction have captured the attention of the organisations and individuals working on the Jamuna *char* region.

The Jamuna Char Integrated Development Project has closely been monitoring the multi-dimensional effects of the construction and recording the changes taking place in human and social life.

In order to assess the impact of the construction of the bridge, we made an effort as part of which a document depicting the scenario of the impending disaster in terms of human sufferings and forced-displacement of thousands of people has come out.

Human habitation in the *char* land is the history that resembles the bitter struggle of the early settlers of this alluvial flood plain. Being in the technically fragile zone, Bangladesh experienced a large number of embankments and dams in the name of water management. *Chars*, unique in land type and settlement history, distinct in mode of life and existence, are at stake, specially in the Jamuna region, owing to the changes to the river channel as well as river morphology caused by the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project.

The very process of the construction of the JMB, particularly the noise pollution deafen the ear of our children, deform the yet-unborn and rob the hard-earned sleep at the end of a long back-breaking day.

We appeal to the inspection panel, to stand beside us in support of our right to survive, sustain our long-standing knowledge, and protect the social coherence achieved through our perennial struggle for lives and livelihood.

Damage to ecological balance to such a degree because of this kind of human actions amounts to a deliberate denial of our right to live or exist. Our existence is rooted in the process of erosion and accretion, appearance and disappearance of *chars*. We derive our subsistence from the land and water, the *char* and the river. Our agriculture, fishery, transportation, rituals, social harmony have an inseparable link with the river.

The Jamuna Bridge, as predicted and already proved (to our dismay) is severely dismantling all these.

Mitigatory plans, apparently well-fashioned and envisaged in order to comply with official order, have neither taken notice of these issues, nor are aware of the fact that the *chars* are not a barren land but are full of cacophony of life, both human and non-human. We urge all to be aware of this fact.

This is of vital importance that we the people of *char* have experienced several embankments, existent or planned to protect the mainland people, and at the cost of our live and livelihood.

The JMBA in its various documents has technically elucidated various engineering and morphological aspects. We, the *char* people, who have acquired the knowledge from experience through ages and apply those in every step of our life, clearly understand that we and our nature around us have become undue victims of the bridge project.

We Would Like to Cite the Following Examples in Order to Draw Attention of the Inspection Panel to the Harm Suffered by the People.

Boropeari and its adjacent *chars* and flood-prone areas had nothing to boast other than three schools, five mosques and 7-8 small shops as community entitlement. Surrounded by river on all sides, their lands are still fertile and products crops such as wheat, *cheena*, nuts, brinjal, and coriander. Just two kilometers off the bridge site, a village called *dash chars* is separated from Boropeari by a nearly dry river. The bridge project devoured much of their cultivable lands for which they had not been compensated as yet. People of the area had registered claims several months ago but were yet to receive any response from the authorities.

Dorota Char is Roughly two and a half kilometers off the bridge site where work is progressing fast, they live under the constant threat of being devoured by the mighty Jamuna. Last year, floods swept a substantial part of their lands, from the western side of Boropeari to Dogachi, into the river. The river threatens to do more damage to the area overlooking the Serajganj *ghat* and located only 15-20 minutes away by country boat from the district town. One school, three mosques, 5-6 small shops and a dirt road stretching from Berabari to Darota are all that are worth mentioning as community entitlement. The road, beating the flood waters in height, provided the shelter for their cattle.

The people of Alipur *char* mostly came from the Singuli *char*. Their own lands had been devoured by the Jamuna.

The *char* is rich in agriculture, with plenty of trees. There are roads, schools, madrasahs, shops, market places and mosques. This *char* is in fact a part of the mainland, but the Dhaleswari river has made it look like a *char*. The inhabitants believe that damming up the Dhaleswari as part of the bridge project has caused a big erosion in Belatia, in which about 100-150 homesteads went under water. Knowledgeable circles in the area say that damages this year would be much greater. The villagers said that the Jamuna had made a dent of about 150 feet in the west during last year's floods. They believe that flood water would have much greater strength this year and continue to cause damages to the western side of the *char*. They said that closure of the Saidabad channel had already started causing problems for them. Villagers' plea to the higher authorities to find remedies to their problems had gone unheeded. There is no tributary as such in this area comprising 7-8 *chars*, but the closure of the Dhaleswari channel led to erosion and destruction of 150-175 homesteads in Belatia during last floods, creating a new stream flowing down to the river in the east. People fear further damages this year.

The bridge would leave the river narrower, with the 4.8-kilometer bridge being approached by a road coming well into the river, thus obstructing the flow. The current would have its speed strengthened by 3-4 times and the *chars* on the southern side of the bridge would just perish under the water. The *char* in the east would also confront the current and might face the similar fate. Already, these *chars* are burdened with extra population from *chars* at the mid point which got dissolved into the river.

The area stretching 10-12 miles towards the north and 5-7 miles towards the south as the most vulnerable. Excess water would cause flooding in the north, while people in south would be forced to shift to other places in the face of the devastating erosion. There would be acute unemployment as their land had already gone under water. An estimated 4-5 thousand families would be homeless and without any source of earning.

The data sheet annexed herewith describes the losses and damages only of 75 Chars. but the number of char is not confined within this limit.

6. We Believe the Action/Omission is the Responsibility of the Bank.

We strongly believe that the Bank bear the responsibility of omissions as the bridge project is abided by the rules defined in the resettlement guidelines of the Bank. The environmental impact assessment is one of the key factors. The bank has not taken into consideration the miseries of the *char* people during drawing up the resettlement action plan. Since it is a bank financed project so the responsibilities bestows upon the bank to look at the effects of the bank-financed project on the *char* people. It was observed that the bank has not taken into account the miseries of the *char* people. We, the aggrieved people of the *chars* strongly believe that it is the responsibility of the bank to ascertain the extent and level of the damages in the *char* areas caused by the bank-financed project.

Since the bank is a co-financier and the bank has its own defined rules and procedures to be followed in the Bank financed project any omission action amounting jeopardizing the interest of the people and violation of the Bank's rules makes the Bank responsible for such actions omissions.

**7. We Have Complained/Made an Effort to Complain to Bank Staff by [Describe]:
Please Attach Evidence or Explanation.**

We registered our complaint with Mr. Arun Benerjee, Chief, Energy and Infrastructure Unit, Bangladesh resident mission and informed him of the devastating impact of the bridge on the char dwellers. Couple of meetings, both formal and informal, were arranged to discuss on the issues. We strived hard to draw attention of the bank to the fact that the char people would be exposed to the severe impact of the bridge. Like in the documents prepared by JMBA, the Bank officials during discussion failed to take cognizance of the fact that the Jamuna contains charlands not only water channels and the chars are no barren lands, they shelter hundreds of thousands of people with legal entitlement are the char lands. Later on we sent a number of letters to the bank. To date, Bank could not initiate any effective discussion on the relevant issues. The letters attached herewith (Annex) depict the course and nature of the communication with the Bank.

**8. We Received no Response; or We Believe that the Response(s) Attached is
Unsatisfactory Because; [Describe why]:**

It is evident from the attached letters that the bank had not launched any effective process to settle down the matters. It is worth to mention that let alone the issues of accommodating the interests of the char people when, we requested them to provide us relevant documents but the Bank refused to supply us those without permission from JMBA through there is no indication that there is any bar to public access to such documents. At different times we requested them to investigate into the relevant matters but they did not respond to our request. (Annexed herewith the correspondence with the Bank officials)

9. In Addition we Have Taken the Following Steps to Resolve our Problem:

We Have Taken the Following Steps:

We initiated a process of dialogue with the bank officials with a view to bringing into light the unattended issues. The interaction process was aimed at exploring the avenues for resolving the problems. The interaction process did not yield optimum results.

We therefore believe that the above actions/omissions which are contrary to the above policies or procedures have materially and adversely affected our rights/interests and request the Panel to recommend to the Bank's Executive Directors that an investigation of these matters be carried out in order to resolve the problem.

As advised in your Operating Procedures, this Request for Inspection is brief. We can provide you with more particulars.

DATE: 18-08-96



SIGNATURE:

Majibul Huq Dulu

CONTACT ADDRESS: Jamuna Char Integrated Development Project
House # 37, Road # 4, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Phone : 865729, 502391 Fax : 880-2-866368

Attachments: [Yes][☒] [No][☐]

1. Annex - 01 Proof of Authorization by the Affected People
2. Annex - 02 Proof of Communication with the Concerned Agencies
3. Annex - 03A Proof of Land Entitlement of the Affected People
4. Annex - 03B Proof of Land Entitlement of the Affected People
5. Annex - 03C Proof of Land Entitlement of the Affected People
6. Annex - 04 Char Inventory - Basis for Assessment of Damages

We authorize you to make this Request public [Yes][☒] [No][☐]