

**The mighty Jamuna behaved dramatically in the first 10 days of September:**

ADPC team has continued monitoring the fresh flood situation and gradual recession of river water level in the Brahmaputra river system in last week or so. Since the last day of August, a steady rise was observed for couple of days in the Brahmaputra basin but it manifested a very slow rise. For few days it was slow and receded on 3-4 September a bit. But, from 5-8 September, the Jamuna river water level has started to take a fresh rise and created a 'dramatic' situation in the basin. Flood situation started to improve from 9 September onward and water level started to recede. Next 10-days of CFAN forecast indicates a continuing recession in next few days onward. However, in last ten days, all along the water level was over the danger level and most of the agricultural crop fields both in the Upper Jamuna and in the lower parts remained flooded for almost 10-days or more in vast areas.

**Riverbank erosion in the lower part of the Jamuna:**

During the fresh rise in the flood situation in later half of first week, some erosion was observed by the riverbanks of the Jamuna. People faced scouring and wave erosion and in the exposed bank sides. During the fresh rise period, people observed inundation, threats to their protective earthen embankments. People in communities tried to take local protective measures besides their traditional ways of shifting and relocating to the relatively safer grounds. People in the *Charlands* had to move into the embankments and move their livestock and homestead assets to the "nearest but any trusted locations". As livestock remained as a form of their economic insurance they were quite reluctant to just leave domestic animals in abundance. Homesteads besides the riverbank tried to protect using the wave protection measures as well as firming the base of their houses or lifting things into higher locations.

**People's response: "wait-watch-worry and work"**

During this week of flood response, people are seen to take many measures to protect their tangible livelihoods and homestead assets. But the field crops remained heavily inundated for almost 10 days time since the water level started to run over the danger level. In the community, people were observed to a dynamic approach of "wait-watch-worry and work". People tried to make an compare their experiences of last years flood situation and observed/watch to what level the water is rising comparing to 2007 flood in their respective areas. In the lower Jamuna, people faced shortage of animal fodder and a scarcity of dry firewood for their household cooking. Many people are observed to collect floating firewood, straw and other stuff from upstream and used for their household cooking purposes and as animal fodder.



Picture 1. Flood water raised and fallen but remained over danger water level for all along the first week of September, 2008.



Picture 2: Riverbank erosion observed, put some threats to households

### **Standing crop and Agricultural rehabilitation:**

Standing crops such as the transplanted aman and broadcast aman remained affected by the duration of flood stay in the crop fields and particularly in the low lying areas the situation has been critical. Farmers remained constantly enthusiastic to know when the flood water will fall. Some farmers pointed out that if the newly transplanted aman field remained inundated for more than 10 days or over then it would not be possible to get any crop out of the existing transplantation. In some areas, unfortunately this has been the case. Farmers in most of the transplanted aman crop areas have completed their transplantation before the flood (anticipating no late flood will arrive this year) and invested for significant amount of fertilizers to the standing transplanted aman. Farmers suggested that it is likely that the whole investment would be damaged. As the water is forecasted to recede in next few days, farmers have started to talk about re-transplanting a “late variety of transplanted aman” as soon as the water completely recedes. However, there has been a likely scarcity seedlings of such variety among the farmers. Farmers need this late variety seeds and also the fertilizer support in coming days. Government responses to this agricultural input/rehabilitation right after the flood recession could prove as a major challenge. Government and NGO responses have started to take shape but a agricultural scarcity of a significant magnitude would be needed and can be clear social forecast in coming weeks in flooded areas.

### **Need for a regular availability of 10-days forecast manifested:**

During the interaction with the local level agency professionals and with the community people, a great deal of receptivity and need was observed for 10 days forecast. People expressed eloquently that they require: a) “when” the flood is coming; b) what would be “flood height” (preferred analogies with their known level or past experiences of flood height); and c) “how long” the flood will stay in their respective area. During the first critical forecasting state, these questions are regularly asked by the people and the local level agency representatives/officials. Local level officials suggested that a 10-days forecast would not only give people a good lead-time to make agricultural investment-decisions but would also give the agency professionals more coordination time to both: a) take immediate preparedness measures (e.g. instruct the agricultural dealer to hold seedlings and fertilizer; advise farmers not to proceed with transplanting etc.); and b) take agency actions/requests to national level through their official machinery to allocate/supply necessary agricultural inputs (e.g. late variety of seedlings) in time. If 10-days lead time can give high level of probabilistic forecast then it’s very welcomed but also if the 10-days forecast can give agency professionals just some indication of the timing of rise/fall of water level, even then this would be very useful for agricultural and other livelihoods preparedness at local levels. A great deal of need for capacity building in this line at local level is also manifested and expressed from agencies.



Picture 3-5. Flood water was stationary in many areas during the past few days. Flood water entered market places, homestead areas, exposed riverbanks but with a slow rise and fall.

**For further information please contact:** Atiq Kainan Ahmed, Social Scientist, ADPC, at: [atiqka@adpc.net](mailto:atiqka@adpc.net)