

CHAPTER - VII

Consequences of Bank Erosion

7.1 Bank Erosion and social Disruption

Bank erosion has been a serious reason of social disruption. Social Disruption has been culminated to blind superstitions. A local news paper “Gour maldah” published an editorial write up dated 23rd October 1998 on the really thrilling incident of social disruption. Some of the villagers of Khairatitola village of Manikchak slaughtered three buffaloes in the nearby Kali temple keeping in view that their sacrifice will bring good fortune as the goddess being pleased will favour serious fortunes. In 1998 on 3rd July near Laxmipur 04 goats had been thrown to river Ganga to satisfy Mother Ganga. On the other hand bank erosion has distorted the spirit of joint family in a way that portion of one brother when is in grasp the other is still intact and further to be engulfed. For which one brother is forced over a time frame to search for new locations of dwelling as well occupational sources. Verbal communications through group talk 15 cases of such type were found during a single visit to Panchanandapur-Birodhi area and 20 cases at Manikchak-Domhat area and was validated through verbal cross verifications. It also created loss of social status of land owners due to undervaluation of their lands (plate 7.1). Before wasting, for example at Laxmipur 3,000 Rs. each Katha of producing land was a general situation. But after wasting when the attempted to reoccupy their land on the other side bank of the river few new thikaders or unauthorized land mediators forced them to buy their lands paying 10,000 Rs. each Katha and even more in a oscillating price value based market situation which was beyond their economic capability. All these incidents were accounted during and after 1998 -2000 period through repeated visit and verbal talk with heterogeneous age group people at two nodal places i.e. Panchanandapur-Birodhi and Manikchak ghat. In these circumstances the only way was to allocate accumulated money for the other family members and to purchase in a bulk. In most of the cases to avoid or minimize village factions and quarrelsome state they favoured to be united within their clan members akin to blood relations which called “gyati system”. This system ultimately consequent upon contribution of proportional money for proportional land holding capacity. But reality speaks little different. As in most

cases all the brothers of a single gyati were not financially of even capacity, there was differential money contribution at the pre purchase level and which only, afterwards created dissatisfaction among them and ultimately another breakage at social level in spite of the physical threat by the grasping river. It has heard that, Miscreant groups of Gadaichar who perform unwanted snatch and unlawful actions called as social vile mainly attack the poor peasants. Actually reappearance of new charlands along the Bihar side border areas without judicial ownership consequent upon unlawful capturing for exaggerated greeds. Panic from such wretch groups at Duani, Bhutni, Gadai and surrounding areas have noticed in the experiences of the villagers during 2000. It also changed the occupational structure of the concerned areas. A few number of students were engaged in services, petty trade, and river-related occupations (Iqbal, 2001, 2010). At Panchanandapur what was the scenario of the main earning member of the 25 unit affected families (small sample) in terms of shift in occupational structure was exemplified (*table. 7.1*).

Table 7.1 Change in Social space through Occupational Shift: Panchanandapur

Sl. No.	Before wasting of land	After wasting of land
1	Agriculture	Marginal labour/land worker(seasonal)
2	Agriculture	Hired Labour
3	Teaching and Agriculture	Teaching
4	Agriculture	Tobacco Packing & compensation seeking
5	Agriculture	Labour outsourcing(contiguous states)
6	Agriculture	Degraded agriculture
7	Agriculture	Land labours/workers
8	Agriculture	Bindi(indigenous cigars)binding
9	Shop keeping	unemployed
10	Service	Tobacco packing(small scale)
11	Service	Tobacco Packing and indebting
12	Business	Member Ganga Action committee
13	School Teacher & agriculture	Contract Business
14	Grocery shops	Same(deformed condition)
15	Grocery shops	Grocery shops(temporary shop)
16	Agriculture	Labour outsourcing(contiguous states)
17	Labour	Labour

18	School Teaching and Agriculture	labour Contracting
19	Cultivation & Boat sailor	Cultivation to other land
20	Sewing cloths	Sewing and Tobacco Packing
21	Agriculture	Private service
22	Agriculture	Small psiculture
23	Agriculture	Tobacco Packing and indebting
24	Agriculture	Marginal labour/land worker(seasonal)
25	Agriculture	Daily wage work

Source: Field Investigation (autumn, 2010).

Over viewing the above table it is being evident that all on an average the social prosperity which is normally an indicator of social well being was seriously degraded rather disrupted after land failure periods at Panchanandapur-Birodhi area. The above table is only a case wise analysis but the situation was a cumulative one over periods roughly from 1990s to 2010-11 even till date at various magnitude of severity. In the next table same situation was exemplified in Manikchak block taking same number of sample units to verify change of situation in respect of occupation (*table. 7.2*).

Table 7.2 Change in social space through Occupational Shift: Manikchak

Sl. No.	Before wasting of land	After wasting of land
1	Agriculture	Outsourced labour and land labour
2	Agriculture	Outsourced labour and land labour
3	Agriculture	Outsourced labour and land labour
4	Agriculture and orchards	grocery (stationary articles)
5	Agriculture	Seeking compensation ,visiting beggar
6	Agriculture	Hired labour
7	Agriculture	Boatman
8	Agriculture	Business supplier(seasonal)
9	Agriculture	labour in other land
10	Agriculture and orchards	Other business activity
11	Agriculture	Interstate labour (contiguous states)
12	Agriculture	Interstate labour (far off states)
13	Agriculture	tobacco Packing and homestead worker
14	Agriculture	Interstate labour (contiguous states)
15	Agriculture	Salesman(food articles)

16	Agriculture	Marginal worker
17	Agriculture	labour in other land
18	Agriculture	labour in other land
19	Agriculture	labour to other state
20	Agriculture	tobacco pouch making & begging
21	Agriculture	labour to other state & tobacco pouch making
22	Agriculture and orchards	Salesman
23	Agriculture	Land labour(exploited level)
24	Agriculture	Ferrying
25	Agriculture	Material supplier

Source: Field Investigation (autumn, 2010).

There was change in income level with change in family structure. In a study it was found that the most of the families were nuclear in structure, with 56.8% (21 families) being unitary households (Iqbal, 2010). The scenario can be assumed in two case studies of Panchanandapur (Fig. 7.1) and Manikchakghat. In the following table here is the income structure of the family head with one income person which has been viewed in a framework of pre and post wasting situation (table. 7.3) and in 80% cases earned money in Rs. per month in the post situation was found half than that of the pre situation.



Plate 7.1 Aesthetic preservation at the disposal of bank failure

**Table 7.3 Pre and Post income situation of bank erosion (25 unit family)
Manikchakghat**

Sl No. of family	Pre situation Income in Rs. Per month	Post situation Income in Rs.per month	Difference(Rs.)	% change
1	8,000	3,500	4,500	56.25(-)
2	9,500	4,000	5,500	57.89(-)
3	7,000	1,800	5,200	74.28(-)
4	7,500	3,500	3,500	50.00 (-)
5	13,000	1,500 to ,2000(Floating)	11,000	84.61 (-)
6	7,500	3,350	4,150	55.33 (-)
7	7,000	4,000	3,000	42.85 (-)
8	12,000	5,500	6,500	54.16 (-)
9	28,000	2,000	26,000	92.85 (-)
10	20,000	8,000	12,000	60.00 (-)
11	18,600	7,500	11,100	59.68 (-)
12	8,000	4,700	3,300	41.25 (-)
13	5,000	2,250	2,750	55.00 (-)
14	9,000	4,200	4,800	53.33 (-)
15	4,500	5,000	500	11.11 (+)
16	8,000	4,000	4,000	50.00 (-)
17	6,750	2,300	4,450	65.93 (-)
18	7,000	2,950	4,050	57.86 (-)
19	25,000	7,500	17,500	70.00 (-)
20	7,500	2,400	5,100	68.00 (-)
21	10,000	5,500	4,500	45.00 (-)
22	5,000	3,000	2,000	40.00 (-)
23	6,600	2,500	4,100	62.12 (-)
24	5,500	4,400	1,100	20.00 (-)
25	5,500	2,700	2,750	50.00 (-)

Source: Field Investigation (autumn, 2009), Group interview.

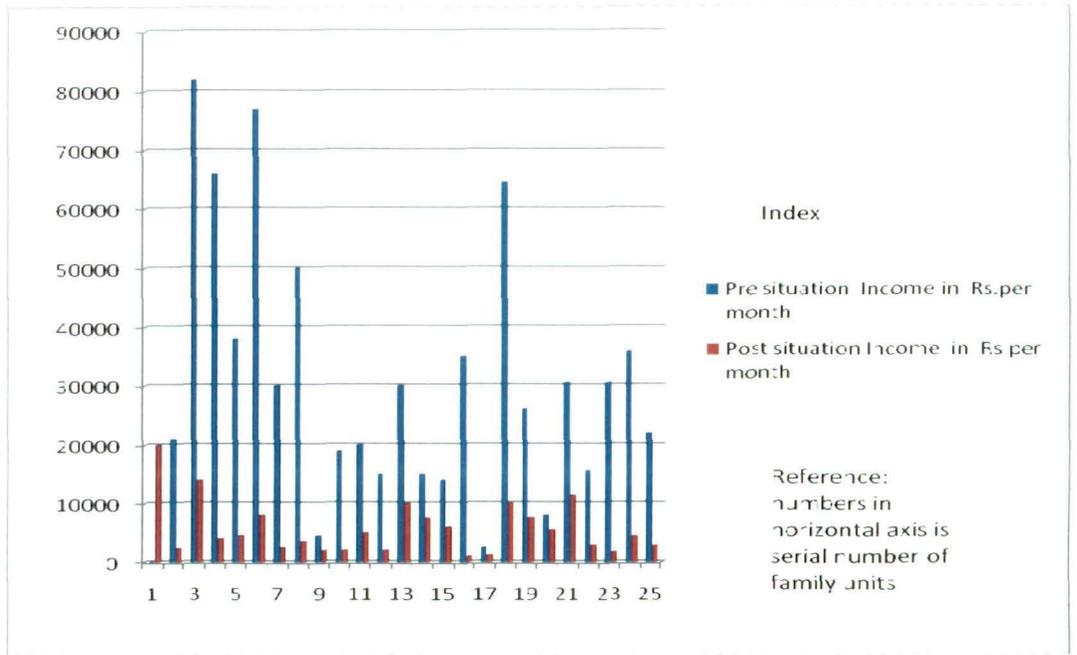
Similar situation was witnessed in case of Panchanandapur which was more acute and severe affecting even their life holding competency. Fall in agriculture is an indicator of social backwardness now. Backwardness in agricultural development has been found in five blocks. Kaliachak II is one of them (Siddiqui and Hussain, 2010).

Table 7.4 Pre and Post income situation of bank erosion (25 unit family)
Panchanandapur

Sl No. of Family	Pre-situation Income in Rs.per month	Post-situation Income in Rs.per month	Difference(Rs.)	% change (Difference/Pre situationx100)
1	1,05,000	20,000	85,000	80.95(-)
2	21,000	2,400	18,600	88.57(-)
3	82,000	14,000	68,000	82.92(-)
4	66,000	4,000	62,000	93.93(-)
5	38,000	4,500	33,500	88.16(-)
6	77,000	8,000	69,000	89.61(-)
7	30,000	2,500	27,500	91.67(-)
8	50,000	3,500	46,500	93.00(-)
9	4,500	2,000	2500	55.56(-)
10	19,000	2,000	17,000	89.47(-)
11	20,000	5,000	15,000	75.00(-)
12	15,000	2,000	13,000	86.67(-)
13	30,000	10,000	20,000	66.67(-)
14	15,000	7,500	7500	50.00(-)
15	14,000	6,000	8,000	57.14(-)
16	35,000	1,000	34,000	97.14(-)
17	2,500	1,200	1,300	52.00(-)
18	64,500	10,000	54,500	84.38(-)
19	26,000	7,600	18,400	70.77(-)
20	8,000	5,500	2,500	31.25(-)
21	30,500	11,400	19,100	62.62(-)
22	15,600	2,900	12,700	81.41(-)
23	30,500	1,700	28,800	94.43(-)
24	35,800	4,400	31,400	87.71(-)
25	22,000	2,800	19200	87.27(-)

Source: Field Investigation (autumn, 2009), Group interview

In the above *table. 7.4* the situation has even found much more badly than that of the earlier case study of Manikchakghat. Only for a single family the percentage change has been found as a positive case, whereas the situation of the rest 24 families is not even capable to earn their subsistence which ultimately resulted into village factions and demand based dissatisfaction exaggerated the situation of social tension. Astonishingly in few cases the percentage change is more than that of 85% reduction while comparing the before and after situation of erosion. The following Digram is presenting the contrasting situation with wide range of variability. The breakage of unitary family also resulted very bad in agricultural sectors. In a study the largest household in the sample, belonging to an extended family at Dakshin Chandipur, was found with 20 members (Iqbal, 2010).



Vertical axis presents Rs.

Figure 7.1 Contrast of Pre and Post Erosion Situation in Income: Panchanandapur

In the above figure the situation of pre erosion phase is for all the families show a very properiorious condition which has become seriously degraded after post erosion phase (*Fig.7.1*).

Serious investigation over other associated problems will also show some miserable conditin of the local inhabitants related to their life and even to be intact at specific locations. Examples of 25 household units having the problems of shifting of their dwelling places are another important indicator of social disruption (*Fig. 7.2*).

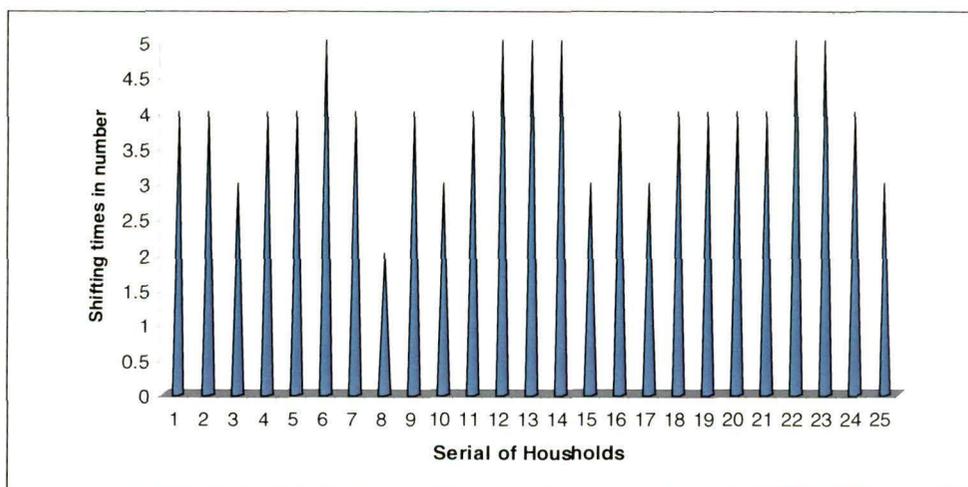


Figure: 7.2 Times of shifting of household: Panchanandapur

In the above diagram its is evident that 70% of the households have shifted their dwelling places for more than 4 times and 20% of them have shifted for 5 times even.

Different other types of social disorderliness and unauthoritative actions were found (*table 7.5*) to be committed as per the mass interactions during June 2008.

Table 7.5 Registering Social Disorderliness at selected spots (June 2008).

Sl. No.	Places	Types of social disorderliness						
		Child missing	Village faction	Snatching	Looting	Offering of cattle to mighty Ganga	Worshipping or river	Grouping
1	Manikchak	X				X	X	X
2	Domhat		X					X
3	Aswinitola	X		X	X	X		X
4	Khaskol			X	X		X	X
5	Sakullapur		X		X			X
6	Panchanandapur	X	X		X	X	X	X

Source: Field Investigation (June, 2008)

The symbol X is indicating entry of the fact.

Such occurrences can have been validated on the basis of newspaper analysis (*table 7.6*).

Table 7.6 Newspaper Analysis on social Disorderliness

Date	Type of action	Description	Loss pattern	Incidence magnitude	Remarks
02.01.2005	Forceful return of Irrigation workers	Sanction of 23 crores but conflict started due to selection of area where from the work will start	Suspension of Government money due to indecision	Capture of 9 th Retired embankment and mass agitation Very High	Conduction of all political party meeting
9.2.2005	Agitation rally at Bangitola	Conflict between thikaders and villagers	Stopping of stone collection for embankment building	Announcement of 8 Km long protection work as government order Moderate	Requirement of mass compensation

30.01.2005	Mass violence, 12 persons injured and hospitalized at Panchanandapur, blood-conflict between villagers of Alhaditola and Mistritola	40 crore of work sanction, 10% of forceful brokerage or unauthoritative commission collection	6 persons were kept under police custody, attack in anticipation at Alhaditola with arms like sticks, bullets, bombs, pistols etc.	Competition among the land owners and the notorious extremist groups regarding collection of brokerage money where the bund repairing is going on. Very High	Probability of postponement of 9 lakh of rupees, arresting persons in extreme actions by Mothabari Police Station.
23.03.2005	Heavy erosion and isolation of 20,000 victims from main land alongside the bank	On 11 th March ½ an hour of violent westerlies resulted destruction of one and only roadway .14 villages have been affected, tremendous erosion from last night 02 hours to morning 04 hours, about 100 m erosion, wiping out of 25 shops, loss of 6 toe walls.	Mental agony of victims and irreparable loss of material articles, grocery goods, public property loss and mass agitation for new road etc.	Demand for extra compensation Moderate to high	Need of allocation of money from Government sector for road building action
28.8.2005	Fear of flood during high erosion activity	Water height was about 25 m and engulfed the villages like Balutola, Gopalpur, Bangitola, Sakullapur etc.	Loss of earthen bund, Demand for 750mx1.5m of embankment at Bangitola, Govt. could have completed only 500mx1.5m	Steady mass protest with quarrelsome situation Very High	Mass dissatisfaction versus Government action
04.09.2005	Piracy of river Pagla in the grasp of River Ganga, 0.75 hectare of land loss at Nayabazar, Panchanandapur	Loss of local Durga devi temple,	Loss of agricultural produce, Settled areas etc.	Moderate	Need of reconstruction of Bally bridge or another roadway at Panchanandapur
11.09.2005	Looting of tarpaulins of erosion Relief	Occurred at Bangitola Gram Panchayet, 280 Tarpaulins lost, looting in between Sakullapur and Bangitola by robbing the tracker vehicle	Plundering resulted rooflessness of destitute	Mass protest Moderate to Very High	Need of 292 Tarpaulins and supplied only 17
25.09.2005	Mass fasting for the demand of relief articles	Occurred in front of District Collectorate on 30th September	Illness of the protesting victims	Moderate	

23.05.1998	Forceful plundering of boatful boulders	miscreants of Gopalpur looted the 14 boatful boulders, same incidence at Hukumat tola, notorious miscreants came through articulated boat	Lingering of embankment building and reformations	Moderate	Close door meeting of the then Chief Minister and the Irrigation minister
23.05.1998	1.5 month of loss of electricity at North Panchanandapur,	Burst of 30KV transformer	Mental agony to face dark nights while persisting fear of bank fall	Very High	
04.07.1998	Snatching of boulders	Police control and security observation of boulder dumping grounds	Wastage of government money	Recurrence of boulder looting resulting into wastage of crores of money, consequences of over pressure of government taxation as indirect impact of erosion and flood Very High	Over looting means excessive demand of boulder supply which results into ecological imbalances in Rajmahal Hills with due course of time.

Source: Rupantarer Pathe, Local News paper (Malda District)

7.2 Loss of Land and Household Properties

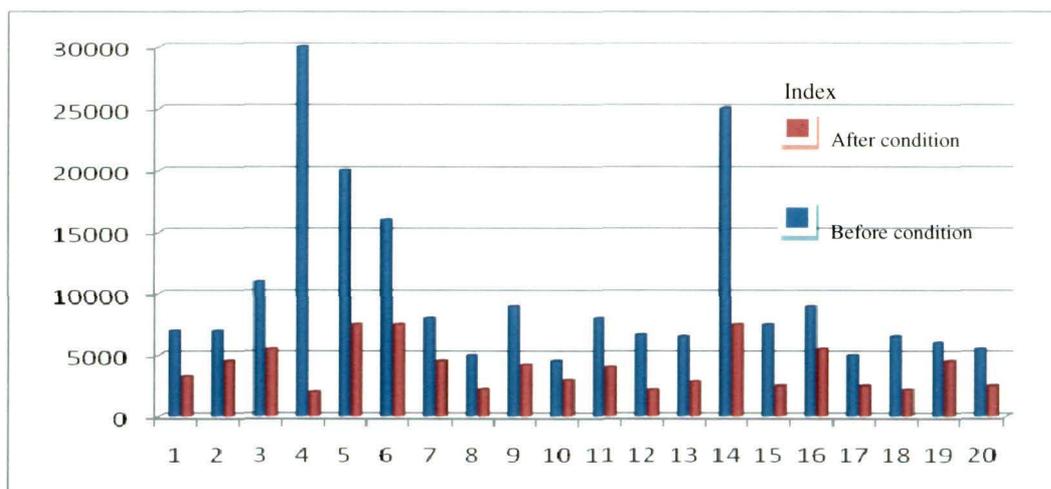
Loss of land property during the year of old and recent past exhibit a deliberately nature oriented scenario. Estimations say that the yearly loss of land in bank erosion was 140.3 hectare (Sen, 2010). From agricultural point of view rigorous bank wasting actually resulted unabated loss of fertile land affecting both the financial and social backbone of the affected areas. The following table will display such a situation in a more chronological fashion over years (*table 7.7*). Till 1978 due to unavailability of comprehensive data regarding land loss on a per year order a gross figure is presented. The following table is showing the vigorous land loss with increasing agony of the farmers (Nandik, 1998).

Table 7.7 Yearly loss of Land in Bank Erosion (1931-2000): Malda District.

Year.	Land Loss (ha.)	Yearly variation (ha)	% change in variation	First 5 Year Average (Ha.)	First 10 Year Average (ha.)	First 15 Year Average (ha.)	First 20Year Average (ha.)	First 30Year Average (ha.)
1931-'78	14335	x		X	x	X	x	x
1979	60.00	x	x	04.20	03.06	03.51	03.41	159.49
1980	104.00	44.00	1.76					
1981	259.00	155.00	6.2					
1982	65.00	194.00	7.76					
1983	92.00	27.00	1.08					
1984	68.00	24.00	0.96					
1985	91.00	23.00	0.92					
1986	106.00	15.00	0.60					
1987	240.00	134.00	5.36					
1988	72.00	168.00	6.72					
1989	152.00	80.00	3.20					
1990	160.00	08.00	0.32					
1991	167.00	07.00	0.28					
1992	130.00	37.00	1.48					
1993	145.00	15.00	0.60					
1994	160.00	15.00	0.60					
1995	145.00	15.00	0.60					
1996	310.00	165.00	6.60					
1997	450.00	140.00	5.60					
1998	395.00	55.00	2.20					
1999	840.00	445.00	17.80					
2000	155.00	685.00	27.40					
2001	220.00	65.00	2.60					
2002	131.25	88.75	3.55					
2003	184.30	53.05	2.12					
2004	NA*	X	X					
2005	NA	X	X					
2006	165.21	19.09	0.76					
Total		2676.89						

Source:Office of Executive Engineer, Department of Irrigation and Waterways, Govt. of West Bengal,1999 (only the part of raw data),NandiK (little magazine),News Papers(Compiled table)

(Note:From 1994 to 1999 the rate of loss of land has been increased very much and after 1999 till date the land loss increment reached to a vigorous degree of 159.49 ha as 30 years average).

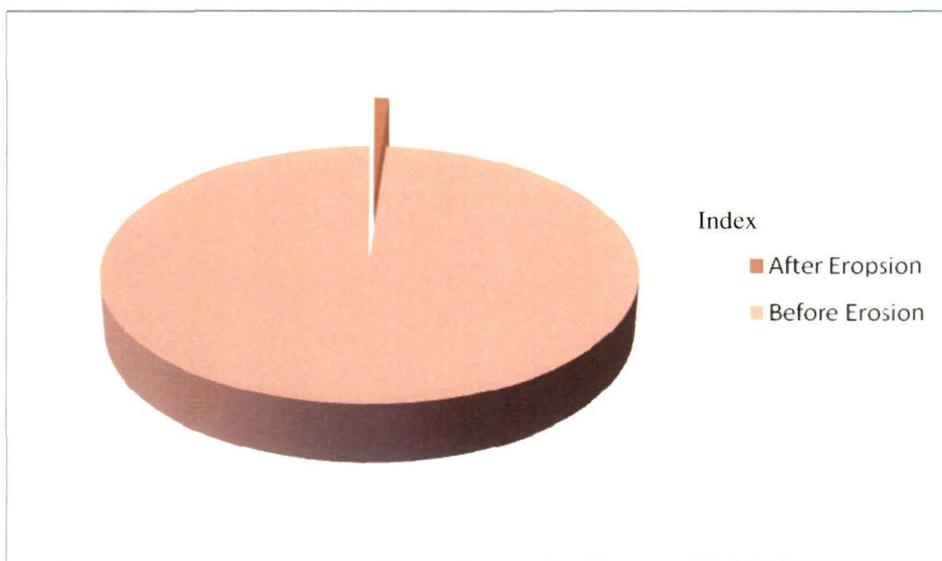


Source: Field Data;June,2008.

Reference: Serial Numbers in horizontal axis show household unit number(s)

Figure 7.3 Income (monthly) of Inhabitants at Manikchak: Before and after Erosion Condition (25 Households).

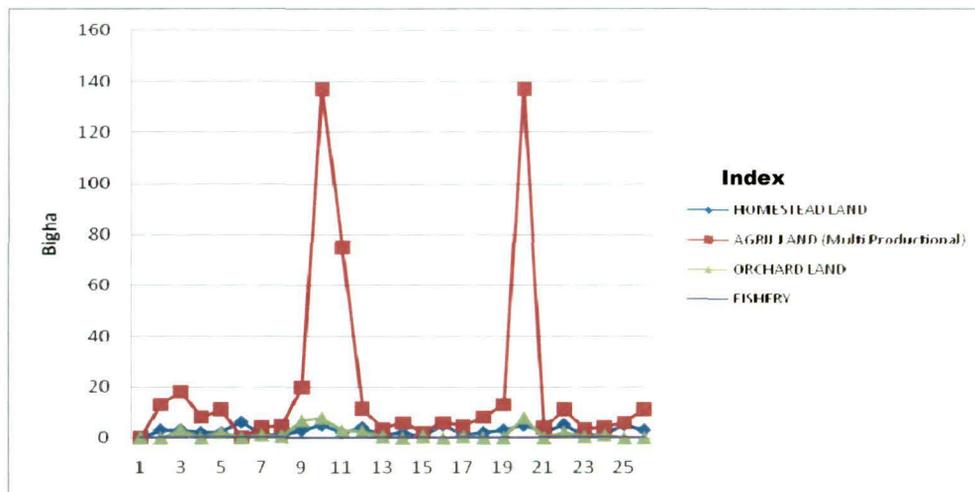
In Manikchak income structure of the inhabitants before and after erosion was really contrasting keeping in view that out of the 25 families(test sample) 50% have found with less than 45% of income averagely. About 25% families are with 1/5th of income presently compared to the earlier condition (Fig.7.3).



Source: Field Data;June,2008.

Fig 7.4 Loss of Bigha of Land at Manikchak: Before and After Erosion condition (25 Households)

In Manikchak the loss of land for the sample household units was about 637 Bigha and only 07 Bigha was found saved after 2002 erosion which inferences that 98.91% was lost and only 1.09% remained after erosion (Fig.7.4).

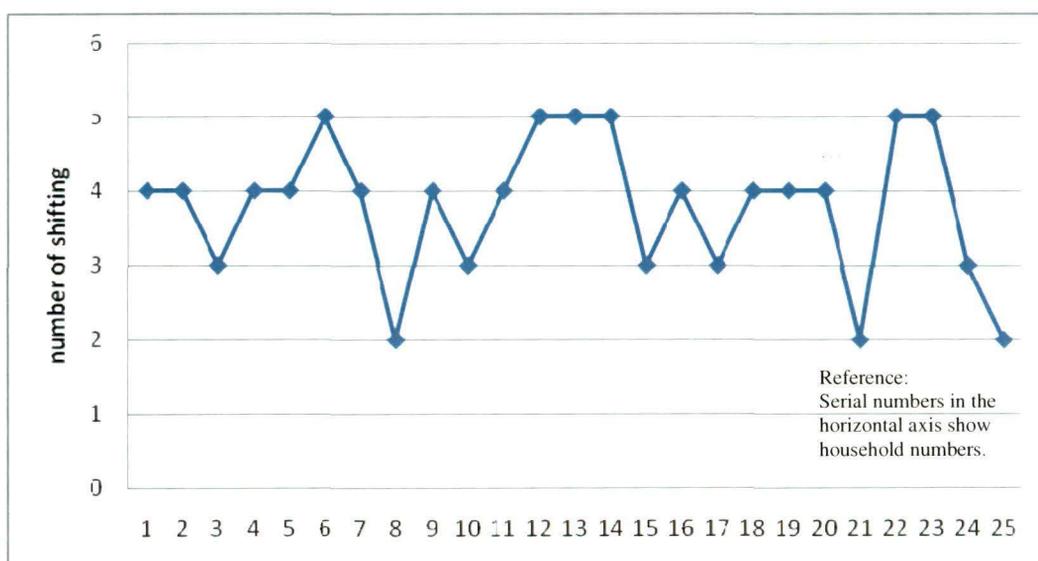


Source: Field Data;June,2008.

Reference: Serial Numbers in the horizontal axis states Serial no. of family units,

Figure 7.5 Loss of Immovable Properties in Manikchak(25 Households).

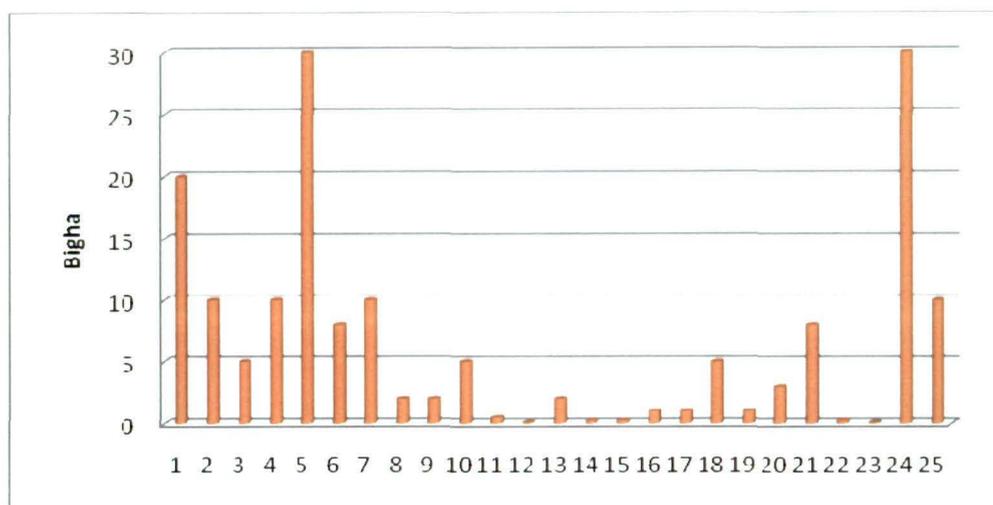
In Manikchak most of the families have lost about 20 Bigha of land and few families have lost about 140 of Bigha(s) including settlement plots, agricultural lands and orchards plus fisheries even.



Source: Field Data;June,2008.

Figure 7.6 Times of Shifting of settlement site (25 Households): Manikchak

20% of families have shifted their households for 05 times (Fig.7.6) and 40% have shifted for 04 times and the rest have shifted for 02 to 03 times.

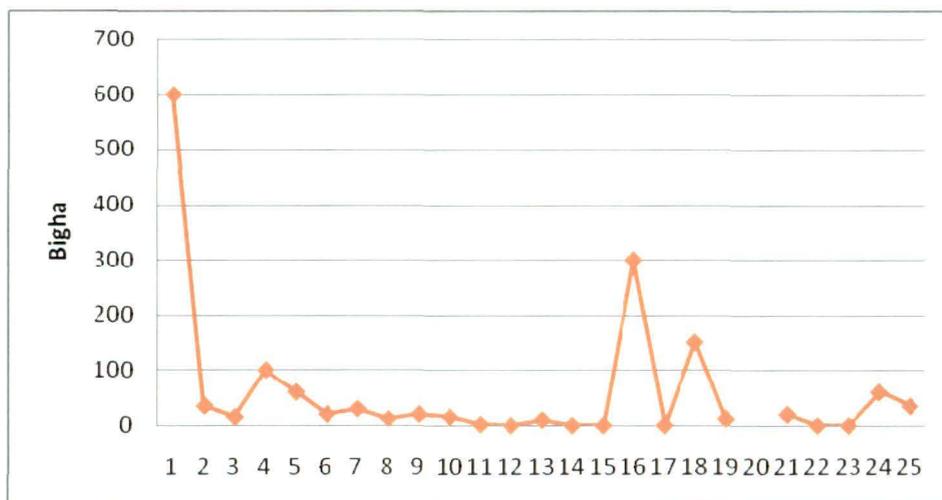


Source: Field Data.

Reference:
Serial numbers in the horizontal axis show household numbers

Figure7.7 Share of Homestead Land (Bigha): Panchanandapur(25 Households).

After erosion actually in Panchanandapur the share of Bigha of land reduced to an amount of only 5 Bigha or less than that.40% of families have 4 to 5 Bigha(s) of land. Only 12% of families have 25 to 30 Bigha(s) of land (Fig.7.7).

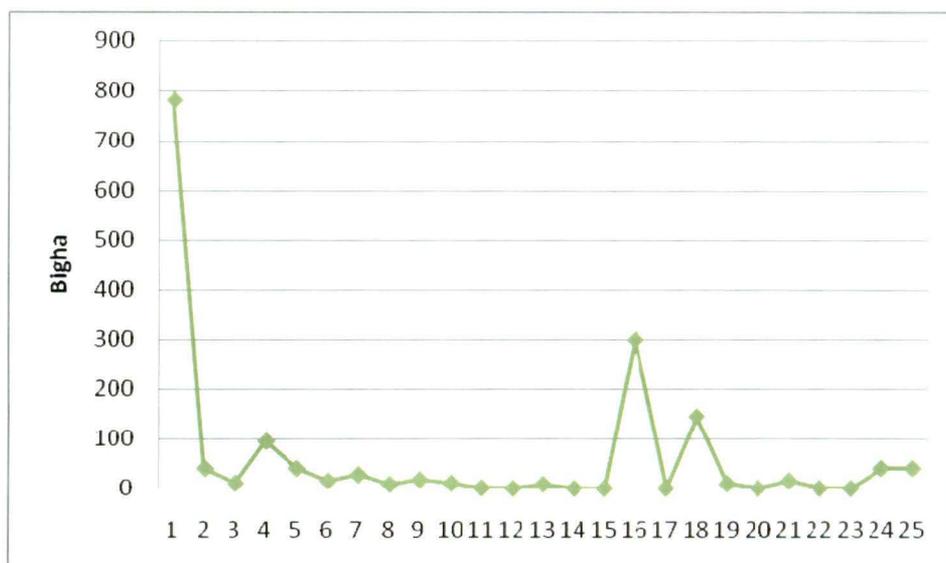


Source: Field Data;June,2008.

Reference:
Serial numbers in the horizontal axis show household numbers

Figure7.8 Production of Paddy Land before Erosion: Panchanandapur.

Before erosion few families in Panchanandapur had 300 to 600 fertile land of paddy cultivation though 60% families had even a share of 50 to 100 Bigha which totally became zero(Fig.7.8) after 2002 post erosion situation.

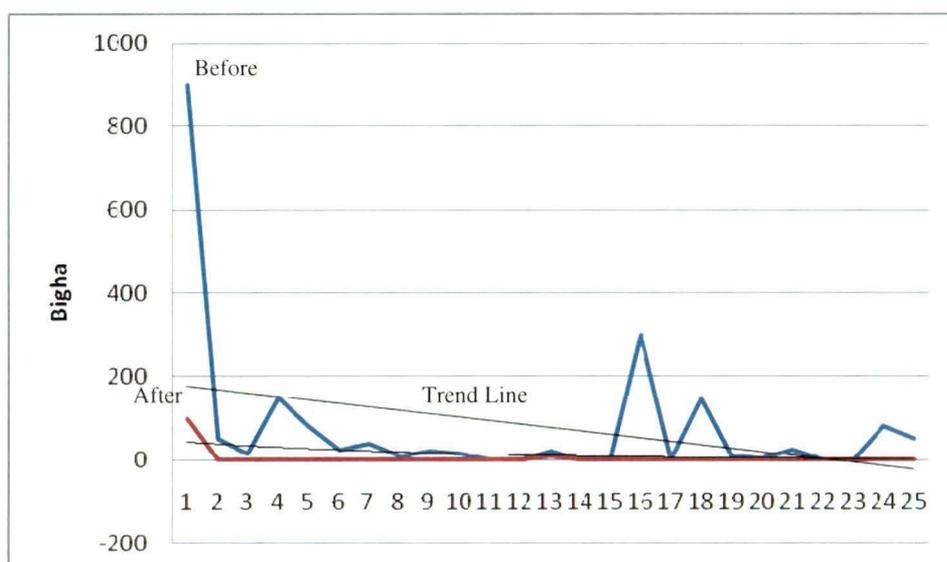


Source: Field Data; June, 2008.

Reference:
Serial numbers in the horizontal axis show household numbers

Figure 7.9 Share of Multi cropping Agricultural Land (Bigha):Panchanandapur (25 Households).

Same situation occurred in case of multi cropping agricultural lands (*Fig. 7.9*). The share of 800 Bigha(s) reached to zero share after serial wasting during 2002 post erosion situation.



Source: Field Data; June, 2008.

Figure 7.10 Land Occupancy: Before and After Erosion: Panchanandapur(25 Households). In case of land occupancy irrespective of almost all families the share is tending towards zero from average of 60 Bigha of share and the trend line is also identifying a

negative relationship in terms of land occupancy and holding capacity (Fig. 7.10). The occupancy trend line even reached to the negative relationship.

7.3 Problems and Rights of Rehabilitation

The problem of erosion has also resulted into tremendous pressure of public demands regarding the unavailability of relief articles and the new sites for building the temporary huts, or small bamboo made quarters as the temporary sites for settlement. Many of the families from Manikchak, Panchanandapur, Domhat, Sukullapur, etc. have gone to the district headquarter i.e. Englishbazar, part of them have taken school grounds, another part of them have occupied embankment tops.

The question of rehabilitation has resulted two aspects regarding temporary sites of settlement, one is purely temporary and relief based, other is temporary in terms of legal occupancy, and the third is temporary but legally settled i.e. identified sites by the government officials. To understand and estimate the situation, the case of the year 1998 and 1999 can be taken up for some selected blocks (table. 7.8).

Table 7.8 Flood and Erosion Damages during 1998 and 1999.

1998 Situation					
Blocks	Area Km	Affected(sq.)	Affected Villages	Affected Population	Affected Families
Kaliachak I	140.5		195	300000	60000
Kaliachak II	209		399	173000	37000
Kaliachak III	127		219	214664	44000
Englishbazar	220		144	170000	34125
Manikchak	230		99	140000	28000
Total	926.50		1,056	9,97,664	2,03,125
1999 Situation					
Blocks	Area Km	Affected(sq.)	Affected Villages	Affected Population	Affected Families
Kaliachak I	41		35	35000	7000
Kaliachak II	08		62	22000	4025
Kaliachak III	125		65	50000	10000
Englishbazar	05		22	2000	2000
Manikchak	120		413	128135	24290
Total	299.00		597	2,37,135	47315
Composite Figures of both 1998 and 1999 Situation					
Grand Total	1225.5		1,653	12,34,799	2,50,440

Source: Uttarbanga Unnyan Parshad (North Bengal Development Authority), 2000

On the basis of the above table it was accounted that the need of 2,50,440 families was not possible for the government to solve readily. On-field investigation during June 2005 revealed that for 50 number of families 30 did not have any holding land at the point of time, 16 family units have disrupted houses, and 04 have houses but at the mercy of the river i.e. at the closest of the bank. On that basis if we analyse the case of 2,50,440 families it can be evident that the figure is 5,009 times (rounded) of 50 which grossly means that 1,50,264 number of families have no houses at given point of time (roughly), though chances of 10 to 20% being plus or minus from the computed above figure is possible. On-field survey resulted the following situation (table.7.9).

Table 7.9 Need based information at Panchanandapur on household Facility.
(80 families)

Type of Housing Facility	No. of Families
Thatched Roofing	30
Tin Roofing and Tin Walls	21
Earth and straw walls	13
Can light lamp in the night(Yes/No)	36
Not even indigenous kerosene lamp	44
Enclosed and safe lavatory(Kuccha)	30
Nearby drinking water source	10
Common wall duplex type huts	2
Bamboo rods with tarpaulin roofing	15

Source: Field Investigation (Pagla ghat area, Panchanandapur)

(Note: Number of families, is inclusive and exclusive purposefully)

From the above table the degree of need can easily be estimated that how much it was pressing. In the following table the demand of houses for rehabilitation and search of new sites for houses has been presented in a year wise fashion (table.7.10).

Table 7.10 Demand of houses for rehabilitation in Bank Erosion.

*Cumulated figure up to 1996

Sl No.	Year	People affected
1	1979	340
2	1980	552
3	1981	1376
4	1982	345

5	1983	489
6	1984	361
7	1985	843
8	1986	563
9	1987	1276
10	1988	806
11	1989	850
12	1990	387
13	1991	680
14	1992	770
15	1993	850
16	1994	770
17	1995	1647
18	1996	50,000*

Source: Department of Irrigation and Waterways, West Bengal, 1999.

According to the government records about 4.5 lakh people have become homeless destitute during the last three decades. 22 mouzas of Manikchak, Kaliachak I, II and III blocks have been abolished from the map of the district. 16 mouzas of Bhutnichar have been destroyed and facing acute problems of rehabilitation.

The rights of rehabilitation has been reserved in terms of their fundamental rights as a citizen in the Union Government System on 1. Food, 2. Cloth, 3. Shelter and 4. security which has been culminated to minimum standards of life expectancy cum social Well being in terms of minimum attainment of 5. Health, 6. literacy and Education 7. Sanitation and 8. Protection etc. Provisions of human rights Commission and Women rights at places and in cases also be considered which are situational and lawful.

The constitution of India in its preamble reflects the resolve to secure to all its citizens, justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship and equality of status and of opportunity. Among the fundamental rights guaranteed to all persons under part III of the Constitution are the rights of life (Article 21) and the right of equality (Article 14). These are subject to reasonable restrictions on the grounds of sovereignty and integrity of the country, security of the

state, public order, decency or mortality (Muralidhar. S, Delhi High Court). In the following parts of discussion some rights have been presented in the form of their types and grounds of validation of the provisions of rights for disaster victims.

7.3.1 Legal Aid

In 1987 the enactment on Legal services Authorities Act (LSAA) was done. In this act expansive meaning to legal services was given. In LSAA's under section 12 the list of entitlement of categories of persons or victims are given who come automatically under legal aid without making any proof of list. It also includes a person under circumstances of unserved want. Such as being a victim of mass disaster, ethnic violence, caste atrocity, flood, erosion draught, earthquake, or industrial disaster. The LSAA has their legal aid institutions at the village, district and state level. At the local level the victims can sought their problems before the authority which comprises members of the judiciary and executive body. The right may confirm to the following situations.

- a) When no food to eat
- b) When no medicine to keep at least liveliness.
- c) Tremendous insanity in the contiguous ambient
- d) Caste and communal atrocity in distribution of relief articles.

7.3.2 Work Facility

It is actually a DPSP (Directive Principle of State Policy) as per the Indian Constitution and actually not enforceable to the courts. According to Article 41 the state as per its economic capacity and development, will make supporting and effective provisions for securing the following activities

- a) Right to work
- b) To education
- c) To public assistance
- d) Old age sickness etc.

The rights for Non-Discrimination (Article 14, Chapter III) and equality for opportunity in receiving of matters of public employment (Article 16) can be fitful to the erosion victims. Article 43 confirms the decent standard of life for all workers. The availability of NREGA 2005 (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) can be a successful way out for workless able-bodied victims specially males with miseries. To realize the effectiveness of the right the following grounds are to be cleared.

- a) Identification of poor households
- b) Roster sheets to provide at least one able-bodied member with 100 days of work facility (preferentially during non-agricultural seasons)

7.3.3 Shelter

So far knowledge goes the clear-cut recognition of right to shelter is problematic in the Constitution. But the judiciary recognizes it in terms of forming part of article 21 itself. The Court has enforced no obligation to settle homeless destitute with minimum holding to reside. In case of **Olga Tellis** versus Bombay Municipal Corporation case High Court preserved the right to life which included the right to livelihood. The explanation was that if any slum dweller is forced to deprived of his livelihood, it will finally evict him or her from his or her temporary dwelling place or slum and ultimately a tantamount situation to sacrifice their life in deep miseries. For shelter capture of new Charlands is a pressing need now (plate 7.2).

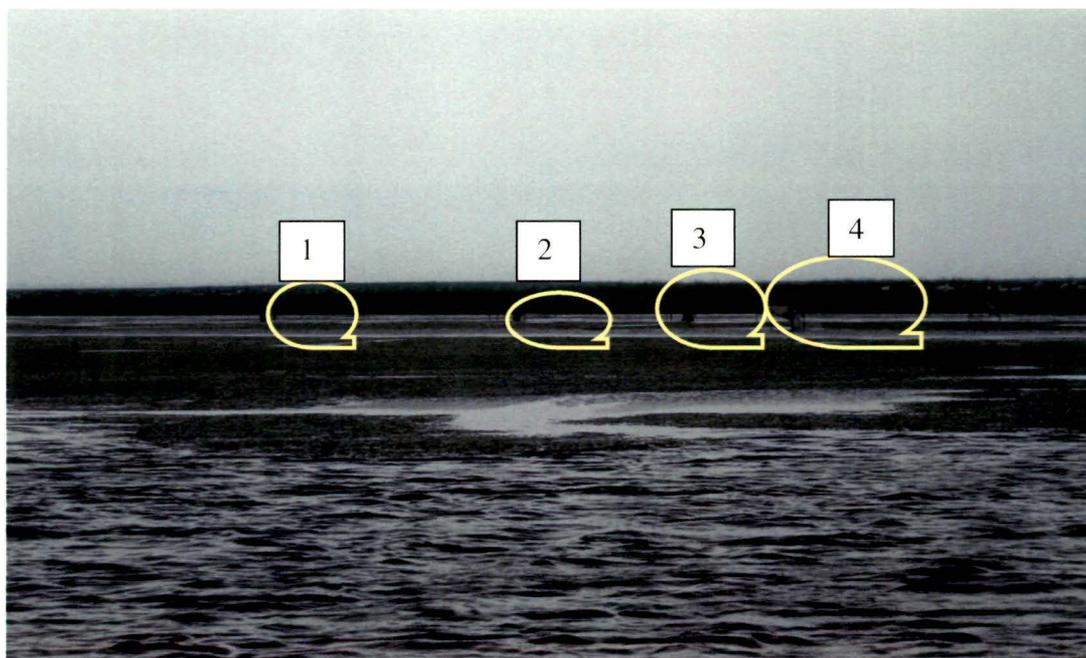


Plate 7.2 Newly silting areas within channel and imprints of human occupancy for occupancy of Land (1,2,3,and 4 are the points of occupancy)

The right may conform to the condition of the victims that

- a) When no roof over the head to be survived.
- b) When no way to earn livelihood

c) When forced by local and actual owner of land from new squatters of victim colonies have been set up i.e. the situation of any type of forceful eviction.

The situation can be examined on the basis of reference of related cases decided till date.

7.3.4 Health

Article 47 of DPSP provide for the duty of the state to improve public health and to the justice point of view from the part if the Court it is integral part of right to life. Though Supreme Court on its part does not set it as a fundamental right but paying of compensation towards the loss suffered by the government can be initiated. The right conforms on Identification and help or compensation level for the victims

7.3.5 Food

In India many drought and flood prone areas have received deep reactions in the courts regarding food. For instance the PIL case dealing with the death toll in starvation in few districts of Orissa can be exemplified. Supreme Court in 1989 reacted to defer to the opinion of the executive Government and found it to be tackled effectively. During 1990s the NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) received some success to set the rights of the public to have food but it succeed in limited grounds. In April 2001, PUCL (People Union for Civil Liberties) prayed to the Court requiring help when many states of the country faced second or third successive year of drought as recurrent misfortune. While having millions of tons food stocks, government failed to provide with the food stuffs to the victims even to be alive only. The result was that the old, disable, long starving, pregnant and lactating women, children etc.were rescued by opening and reopening the regulated PDS (Public Distribution System) shops by eliminating the misfeasance of food distribution and states also asked for the identification of BPL (below poverty line dwellers) families by the Court of honour. The fitfulness can be conformed of from situation to situation. The earlier decided cases with the court's order can be a useful tool in the following cases in favour of the flood and erosion victims.

- a) Awakening the CSG (Civil Society Groups) to carry campaigns for demand of food.
- b) Ordering the PDS and refinement of misfeasance in distribution of needful and minimum ration goods.

c) Pleading for joint or mass prosecution to fetch food and fuel (FFF) for the destitute through NGO s (Non Government Organizations) initiatives and civil movements.

All these provisions should be practiced on condition bound situations and precisely abiding by the honour and apt use of the Constitution of the country.

7.4 Issues on State Economy

Issues resulted from unabated occurrences of bank erosion are as stated below. It has affected both the raw silk yarn production as well the mango cultivation of the district. The annual estimated production of raw silk yarn in this district is about 85% of the total output of the state, if taken in terms of money amounts to about 400 crores per year. Especially in the Diara blocks but continuous bank erosion has disrupted the famous areas of rearing of cocoons (silk insects) and production rate reduced to 72% by the end of 2000 year.

About 45,000 acres of lands in Malda district are covered by mango orchards which, in normal years, breadfruit to the extent of 3,60,000 tones the value of which in money terms comes to about 5.5 crores of rupees during 1996, which reached to about 3.2 crores at the end of 2002 leading to the explanation that loss of fertile orchards in the blocks of Diara like Manikchak, Kaliachak and fewer parts of Englishbazar due to river shifting has resulted this. In the following *table.7.11* the reduction rate of mango production due to loss of lands has been presented.

Table 7.11 Changes in Mango production in Malda.

Sl. No.	Year	Total Production(MT)	Change (M T)
1	1994	69,000	x
2	1995	84,000	Positive
3	1996	62,000	Negative
4	1997	83,000	Positive
5	1998	60,000	Negative

Source: NandiK, District Volume-03, October, 2000.

Malda is famous for mangoes of Gour, Pandua etc. The congeniality of Ganga silt over Diaralands resulted positive growth of mango cultivation over historical periods immemorial to till date in the district. In a survey it was found that Malda district receives about 49,150.38 acres of mango orchard lands, out of which 4 Police Stations of Barind receive only 4,653.72 acres and Diaras had the lion share which is reducing day after day paving through the phases of erosion.

Most of the orchards are alongside the river banks like Ganga, Fulahar, Kalindri and Pagla. During 1958 there were 44,000 acres of mango lands in Malda which was about 80 acres during 1970s but a gross of 30, 00 acreage of loss has ultimately turned the figure to only 50,000 by the end of the year 1999. Durig 2000 Kaliachak (I, II andIII) accounted for 6,311.35 acres of mango lands and Manikchak 5,459.59 acres of mango lands. About 1,500 to 2,000 acres have lost in Manikchak during the phases of erosion. Manikchak in terms of share of mango land stands first in the district.

In the following *table.7.12* the scenario of production of mango has been provided over years of flood and bank erosion to analyse how it resulted into monitory loss in final profit.

Table 7.12 Production and monitory profit of mango cultivation in Malda.

Sl. No.	Year of Flood and Erosion	Production (Quintal)	Total Value(Rs.)	Change Pattern	Analysis and Remarks
1	1970	293085	23,44,680	Initial Year	(1) 07 times of Loss has been observed mainly from a havoc of erosion year to the immediately preceding Year
2	1972	186319	1,49,05,020	High Positive Growth	
3	1973	178579	1,42,00,320	Almost same	
4	1977	760350	6,08,28,000	Positive Growth	
5	1978	291000	2,91,00,000	High Loss	
6	1979	100000	1,00,000	Tremendous Loss	(2) 05 times of Growth have been observed mainly following one year of stabilization after any Erosion or Flood year
7	1981	220000	2,75,00,000	Good Growth	
8	1982	180000	2,25,00,000	Moderate Loss	
9	1985	1112000	11,12,00,000	High Growth	
10	1986	236000	3,54,00,000	High Loss	(3) Two times remained almost same
11	1987	1347840	13,47,84,000	Good Growth	
12	1988	312500	6,25,00,000	High Loss (about50%)	(4) 1979 and 1997 Flood and Erosion Year observed Tremendous Loss for two times
13	1991	1070000	6,25,00,000	Almost same	
14	1992	251605	5,06,20,000	Normal Loss	
15	1995	1225000	24,50,00,000	High Growth	
16	1997	100000	4,00,00,000	Tremendous Loss	

Source: NandiK, District level, Volume-03, October, 2000 and District Agriculture Department, 2001.

Regular loss of land with high frequency also affected the market valuation of land under some dominating category of land use in these areas .The computation

below will evident the significance of that on the social, financial and political fabric of life of the residents.

In the following paragraph the net average loss due to bank erosion and subsequent flood occurrences have been estimated below.

Total area eroded away from 1980 to 1996 was estimated 2466 ha

Area eroded during 1997 was 450.00 ha

Area eroded during 1998 was 395.00 ha

Area eroded during 1999 was 840.00 ha

Area eroded during 2000 was 155.00 ha

Area eroded during 2001 was 220.00 ha

Area eroded during 2002 was 131.25 ha

Area eroded during 1997 was 184.30ha

Area eroded during 2006 was 165.21 ha

On that basis it can be stated that the total loss of land during this period was 5006.76 ha

Thus the per year mean erosion is 185.44 ha for a period of 27 years.

Estimation for 10 years can thus be said that 1854.36 ha or simply 1854.00 ha

According to the database the approximate share of land for different purposes were

Homestead land-----320.00 ha

Orchard land-----320.00 ha

Agricultural land-----1278.00 ha

Unused/waste land-----213.00 ha

The total is 2131.00 ha

Now to estimate the loss as per market valuation Homestead land receives 4, 50,000Rs ha⁻¹

Orchard land receives 2, 40,000Rs ha⁻¹

Agricultural land receives 2, 20,000Rs ha⁻¹

Waste land receives 60,000Rs ha⁻¹

On that basis it can be calculated that:

The valuation of property damaged for omestead land was 14, 40, 00,000Rs.

The valuation of property damaged for Orchard land was 7, 68, 00,000Rs.

The valuation of property damaged for Agricultural land was 28, 11, 60,000Rs.

The valuation of property damaged for Waste land was 12, 78,000Rs.

The total is 50, 32, 38,000Rs.

Thus the 27 year average loss is 1,86,38,444.44 Rs. year⁻¹.

Now the need is to compute the difference between the public demand of money and the competency of the government officials.

During 1998 District authority on flood requested to the Central study team an amount of 430, 73, 00,000 Rs. Now considering the calculated flood frequency in Malda , 8 times in 25 years; it can further be projected that annual Relief and restoration costing from Government calamity fund or through any collection agency is about to 430, 73, 00,000 Rs.x 8 times = 3445,84,00,000 Rs. It may be thought that the nature and magnitude of all floods is not same and as per the severity it may be required. Actually 1998 flood and erosion was a severe one . If at least half the amount of money is to be allocated it will be a huge pressure in annual budgetary allocation for any government i.e. about 15,00 crore of money in a country like India and state like West Bengal. The irony lies in the following *table 7.13*.

Table 7.13 Allocation of money for Flood and Erosion: Share of State and Central Governments.

year	Total Expenditure(Rs.)	State Government Share (Crore Rs.)	Central Government Share (Crore Rs.)	Remarks
1997-1998	28.40	7.10	21.30	0.25:0.75
1998-1999	60.00	15.00	45.00	4:7.42
1999-2000	50.50	12.62	37.88	0.25:0.75
2000-2001	47.10	11.78	35.32	0.25:0.75

Source: Ganga Bhangon: Maldaha basir ekti jalonto Samassa' (Periodical,1996)

If we take the case of 1998 the gap of need and supply was not at a comparable level, and not even enough to supply the food stuffs for subsistence only. In spite of this the allocation of money in the 10th Financial Commission by the Central Government was only 20 crore of rupees, where the need was for 1,500 crore of rupees. Thus the gap was about 1,480 crores of money and this is recurring immediately after any onset of flood and erosion and reduces little bit after every withdrawal of flood situation.

Boulders have also played great role in the economic scenario of the district. Actually boulders are highly expensive at the different stages of the economic action. One lakh rupees is required to build up 1 m long spur.13 crore rupees was sanctioned to reconstruct the 24 no. spur in 1998. During 1997 14 crore rupees was utilized to

prepare 11 submersible spurs at Akheriganj of Murshidabad district. A 100 m long spur desires 14,357 ton boulders proportion to the market value of about 5 crore of rupees. Reconstruction of Manikchak-Gopalpur embankment required about 25 crores of rupees. In 1998 the amount was sanctioned by the Government with contingency expenditures as additional support. During 1998-1999, 4.75 crores of rupees were allocated to call tender quotations of builders and promoters in this field. About 100 small and medium promoters each fetched 3lakhs of work deal and lion share of the allocation reached to 14 major Promoting companies. Close on field examinations open the fact file that 70% of the material unloading of gunny bags, wire coils, boulders, cement bags, iron pegs etc. were done before and onset phases of monsoon seasons and the result was disappearance of the materials after rain withdrawal period with a blame that the river collapsed everything while the truth is far-off the reality. Gossips on scam and bribing even can be heard as a result of this natural cum social menace. In a purely village ambient it is really undesired which is equivalent to socio-cultural violence and provoking of newer village factions modulated by complex urban culture.

Claims, demands and implementations - *the trio* in most cases is imbalanced. Keeping in view the excessive bank erosion of the River Ganga in Malda & Murshidabad, the Planning Commission had set up an expert Committee under the Chairmanship of the Member (River Management), Central Water Commission, which recommended long term and short term measures costing Rs. 927.00 crore, out of which short term measures cost Rs. 315.00 crore and long term measures cost Rs. 612.00 crore. As suggested by the expert Committee, the Farakka Barrage Project Authority has prepared an estimate amounting to Rs. 160.84 crore for the work "Anti Erosion, flood protection and river training measures" and submitted it to the Ministry of Water Resources subject to approval and execution.

An amount of Rs. 19.68 crore has been approved by the Ministry for undertaking the following schemes:

- i) Anti Erosion, Flood protection and River Training measures.
- ii) Special repair works of the existing assets/ structures.

Dispute was in perfect planning, honest responsibility for the utilization of the resources and money, timely action, stopping wastage of careless procurement of materials etc., unavailability of which actually make all the government policies futile

at last. Both the Pritam Singh and the Keshkar committees though advised ways but the plan towards implementation was not properly executed.

In 1980 Pritam Singh Committee was set up and it suggested sanction of 294 crores of rupees. Seeing the severity another Committee was also set up in 1996 known as Keskar Committee of 927.00 crore, as stated above. But the irony was what the initiation of such huge money realized as a futile decision later having no restriction against the river morphometry.

An amount of Rs. 19.68 crore was approved by the Ministry for undertaking the following schemes:

- i) Anti Erosion, Flood protection and River Training measures.
- ii) Special repair works of the existing assets/ structures which have the proposed action to be taken up was 946.68 crores.
- iii) On the other hand bank erosion also exerted over pressure on the local economy of the district to supply the rehabilitation articles. To make out the situation few observations of the 1996, 1997 and 1998 Erosion situation is being presented below:

- Agricultural Crop Damaged: Rs.10767.43 Lakh
- Sericulture Damages:Rs.10.50 crores
- Houses damaged:Rs.550.0 Lakh (Malda Dist. Committee L.F;dated20.04.2000)
- Contingency allotted:Rs.3,60,000
- Contingency spent:Rs.4,00,000
- Relief measures taken:
 - Tarpaulin:3,400 pieces
 - Chira:202 Quintals
 - Jagger:40.40 Quintals
 - Dhuti,Sari,Lungi etc:1950 pieces
- Total contingency spent was about Rs. 80,000
- Input loan to farmers after 1998 Flood and severe situation:
 - Kharif/Rabi cultivation:Rs.15 lakh
 - Summer paddy/Vegetables:Rs.20 lakh
- Storage of articles in 1998-1999 flood amounted to:
 - Kalai@3 kg kit⁻¹:Rs.40,000
 - Mustard@1 kg kit⁻¹:Rs.40,000
 - Wheat@15 kg kit⁻¹:Rs.30,000
 - Potato@15 kg kit⁻¹:Rs.15,000
 - Vegetables@40 kg kit⁻¹:Rs.10,000

Source: Flood Preparedness and Contingency Plan, 1998, District Malda, Govt. of West Bengal.

From the above observations it is evident that how the frequent occurrences of serial years of flood and bank erosion resulted uncontrolled expenditure of money, which actually can be attributed to the backwardness of economic backbone of the district. During only in 1998 flood the estimated allocation of money for preservation of large and small animal was about 21 and 18 lakh of rupees respectively. For transportation of relief, travelling charges and for office contingency about 1.51, 1.5, and 1.01 lakh of rupees were allocated for further expenditure.

On the other hand erosion scenario in Malda has affected the economy mostly through the making of the embankments and spurs. It has normally incurred lakh and crores of money. The following *table.7.14* as example to evident the situation, the original figures has been rounded off to idealize the overall situation. The central theme of the following table is to estimate the structural and architectural bunds which have been engulfed or destroyed time to time. Cost of the schemes executed up to 2002 which have been already engulfed by the River Ganga.

Table 7.14 Accounting of six years of expenditure on Structural measures executed..

Sl. No.	Architectural Item	Approximate Value (Lakh of Rs. *)
01	24 no. spur (came into action in 1996)	35.00
02	24 no. spur and Construction of 5 th Retired embankment	720.00
03	Restoration of 24 no. spur and bank protection work At Manikchak and Kaliachak(1998)	420.00
04	P.S Kaliachak, new spur building(01 in number)(1999) Partly completed	800.00
05	Spur no. 20 and 10(executed prior to 1990)	30.00
06	Spur no. 20 and 10(executed prior to 1991)	25.00
07	Strengthening of spur no. 20,18 and 10 executed during 1992-1995)	390.00
08	Restoration of spur no. 10(executed in 1990)	25.00
09	Strengthening of spur no. 20,10(executed prior to 1998)	90.00
10	Construction of 6 th Retired embankment and strengthening of Spur no. 20((executed prior to 1999)	1300.00
11	Bank Protection work over 6 th Retired embankment at Khaskol and Daulat Tola in P.S Manikchak and Enlishbazar(executed in 2000)	550.00
12	Strengthening of spur no. 19 on the left bank of river Ganga upstream of the Farakka Barrage in Kaliachak Police Station(executed in 2000)	50.00

13	Restoration of spur no. 20 and on the left bank of river Ganga upstream of Farakka Barrage, Police Station Kaliachak(executed in 2000)	180.00
14	Construction of 7 th Retired embankment on the left bank of river Ganga upstream of Farakka Barrage, Police Station: Enlishbazar, Kaliachak(executed in 2000)	910.00
15	Construction of 8 th Retired embankment on the left bank of river Ganga upstream of Farakka Barrage, Police Station: Enlishbazar, Kaliachak(executed in 2001)	535.00
16	Remodeling of marginal embankment(Bull-Headed D)	590.00
17	Protection of spur no.18 in Police Station Kaliachak(executed in 2001)	190.00
18	Protection over 8 th Retired Embankment(1.5 Km)from Panchanandapur Tagging point, Police Station: Kaliachak(executed in 2000)	750.00
	Total money utilized for 06 years	7,590.00

Source: I and W Department, Govt. of W.B.,2004

*: The figures of Lakh of Rs. have been approximated and simplified to the closest round figure (both positive and negative).

On the basis of the above table it is evident that for a six year of assessment about 7,600 Lakh of rupees have been utilized without any recurring result now –a – days or little merit of those measures are being realized which will not be surely available in near future.

Thus the problem is directly associated with the economic structure of the district and not only that rather, it has affected the country's economy to an enormous extent.

7.5 Inter-State Border Problem

Course change of Ganga has created conflict between West Bengal and Jharkhand (the then Bihar) governments. The problem can be easily and vividly understood in terms of the charlands study. The analysis is carried out in case of part of Kaliachak block of Malda district in West Bengal. The block receives 21 mouzas out of which the case is of few mouzas, which have emerged from water (realluvial) in the last 10 years. There are three mouzas i.e. Rezakpur, Kamaluddinpur and Daridiar Jhaubona which are completely under water and another six mouzas namely Mahadevpur, Jot Kasturi, Sakullapur, Birodhi and Panchanandapur are partially (major portion) under water and small parts in the mainland (*table.7.15*).

Table 7.15 List of affected Mouzas with their area and population in Malda District.

SL No	Mouza(s)	Area (ha)	Total Population	Existing Status	Danger level 1	Danger level 2	Danger level 3	Population of Identity Crisis
1	Palashgachhi	594	13832	Realluviated (F*)	x			Acute
2	Piarpur	551	12802	Realluviated (F)	x			Acute
3	K. Jhaubona	2739	5604	Realluviated (F)	x			Acute
4	Rezakupur	51	0	inundated			x	Acute
5	Kamaluddinpur	176	0	inundated			x	Acute
6	D. Jhaubona	211	0	inundated			x	Acute
7	Mahadebpur	535	1340	Engulfed(P)		x		
8	Jotkasturi	288	4491	Engulfed(P)		x		
9	Shukurullapur	119	2282	Engulfed(P)		x		
10	Birodhi	100	6579	Engulfed(P)		x		
11	Panchanandapur	2302	21017	Engulfed(P)		x		
12	Darijayampur	111	0	Reclaimed	x			
13	Daskathia	56	0	Reclaimed	x			
14	Islampur	122	0	Reclaimed	x			
15	Hamidpur	1364	5611	Reclaimed	x			
16	Nityanandapur	354	560	Realluviated (F)	X			
17	Jitnagar	399	0	Realluviated(F)	X			
18	Paranpur	1033	8867	Realluviated (F)	X			
19	Ratanlalpur	85	604	Realluviated(F)	X			
20	Shrighar	926	3801	Realluviated(F)	X			
21	Kachi jadupur	75	1254	Realluviated(F)	X			
22	Begamganj	219	293	Realluviated (F)	X			
23	Hakimabad	62	8	Realluviated (F)	X			
24	Mangatpur	120	71	Realluviate (F)	X			
25	Hossenabad	290	692	Realluviated (F)	X			
26	Dogachhi	476	0	Realluviated (F)	X			
27	Gaziapara	466	0	Realluviated (F)	x			
28	Char Babupur	513	178	Realluviated(F)	x			
29	Nayagram	1023	6148	Realluviated (F)	x			
30	Shripur	81	2736	Realluviated(F)	x			
	Total	14295	72136					

Source: Primary Census Abstract, Vol. 7, Census of India, 2001. D.L.L.R.O (Malda) .

Note: (1): F*: Fully*¹, P*: Partly, x: symbol of entry for a cell or small box

(2): Danger level 1, 2, and 3 have been selected on the basis of magnitude of severity of human impact

The problem from the historical times had been forced by the political agreements based on the volatile course change of the river Ganga and subsequent changes in boundary for several times as mentioned below:

- District was formed in 1813 with 8 thanas taking 4 police stations from Purnea, two from Dinajpur and 2 from Rajshahi.
- Malda district was included in Bhagalpur division till 1859.
- Some villages of Malda district lying south of the Ganges were attached to Murshidabad in 1875.(Riverine Reasoning)
- From 1859 AD to 1876 AD Malda was part of Rajshahi division.
- 1876 AD-1905 AD Malda was again part of Bhagalpur division.

- With partition of Bengal, Malda was transferred to Rajshahi division (Eastern Bengal and Assam province).**(Results of *Banga Bhanga* Movement)**
- In the year 1912 partition of Bengal annulled but Malda remain in Rajshahi division till 1947.
- In 1931 transfer of 13 inhabited villages from Santhal Parganas district (erstwhile Bihar) to Malda district (West Bengal) took place.**(interchanging agreements)**
- On 15th August, 1947, the fate of Malda was undecided and it is only on 17th August, 1947 that the obscurity got cleared with major part (6 Police stations/thanas) of Malda remaining in West Bengal (India) and smaller part (5 Police stations/thanas) were included in East Pakistan (present Bangladesh).**(Inter Governmental exchange)**
- Slight modification of Indo-Bangla border as per award of Bagge Tribunal (1950) took place.
- Since 1950 AD more or less the external boundary of the district is as it is now.**(Settlement of 1947 based on thalweg of the River Ganga though it was varying by that time with a considerable magnitude)**

Source: Anwaruzzaman, A. K. M, 2012 (unpublished paper) and self analysis (compiled).

Malda as a district identity has faced phases of inclusions and exclusions with Bhagalpur and Rajshahi divisions before the final settlement of inclusion to the Jalpaiguri division of West Bengal. A Chronological fact file has been presented above.

Here the outset motive is to find out the extent of inter-state boundary dispute leading to the identity crisis of the inhabitants. The actual reason behind the misfortunes of such disaster refugees is because of the course shifting of the River Ganga. The demarcation of state boundary between West Bengal and contiguous former Bihar (presently Jharkhand) is fixed by the deep thalweg point of the Ganges keeping in view equal share of usage of the river by both the states. But the irony is that the mid-stream thalweg of Ganga is more converging towards Malda of West Bengal and diverging towards neighbouring Rajmahal of Bihar. To evident the reality of Ganga boundary as authoritative agreement the following statement can be cited as described in the SOI topographical sheet No.72 P/13 (15' x15' sheet) surveyed in the year 1922-23 "*the province and district boundaries in the Ganges river follow the main deep water channel and will vary as the course of deep water channel changes*". Though the incidentality of deep water variation was considered in the statement but

rearrangement for rectification of the boundary was neither given time specific priority nor accented with deep concern.

It has been heard that, the unabated encroachment of the charlands on the right bank of the river by Mafias, miscreants, notorious snatchers has resulted loss of possession of emerged land even by the real looser cum disaster victims which ultimately has posed the problem of inter-state boundary between Bihar and West Bengal. Even when they are in view to capture their possible proportional land on the stable bank side areas, they have to anticipate threatening from the unauthorized capture groups. Actually in British India when the population was negligible, the course change of Ganga was not a mere question of any uncontrolled hazard as these lands had little market valuation plus agricultural potentiality and was accepted as borderline between the districts of Santhal Parganas of Bihar and Malda of Bengal beyond any such problem. Actually population growth has resulted into an accelerated and problematic situation. The Survey of India map published in 1975 based on 1970-71 survey was found with a valuable footnote as given below, *“Owing to changes in the course of Ganga River, the state boundary between Bihar and West Bengal and the district boundary between Malda and Murshidabad should not be accepted as authoritative.”* The problem was raised in the Ganga Erosion Committee (Singh et al, 1980, Rudra, 2002 and Anwaruzzaman, 2007). The representative of Bihar in that Committee strongly opposed the proposal of construction of two long spurs near Manikchak Ghat of Malda to deflect the impinging flow attacks to the opposite bank. The notion as a defender of his own state behind the opposition was that it could have likely to deflect impinging flow attacks on the west bank (Rajmahal side) and there was possible propensity of erosion along the said bank (Anwaruzzaman, 2007). The reaction of the then Director (Survey of India), Eastern Circle was to mediate the situation so tactfully keeping in view the changing situation of both the state sentiments. He opined that, *“The boundary in this portion of the Ganga follows the deep water channel and varies as the course of the deep water channel changes.”* Again no clear cut idea was forwarded to add something positive to the fate of the disaster refugees. It is interesting to point out that the foot note is surprisingly in contravention with the earlier note of the Survey of India expressed in the map 72P/13 published in 1975. It can be assumed that there was some understanding gap, as the territorial boundary of West Bengal demarcated during the reshaping of the Indian states after independence mainly on language basis, there would

be any ambiguity to understand again any other physical demarcation line river course as a linear aspect. This actually proves the improper linkage between constitutional provisions and approaches taken by SOI. Moreover, the state reorganization commission (Fazal Ali Commission) has delineated boundaries between these two states during 1950s and onwards. The then eastern chief officer of Survey of India Cornell Sarin in the ongoing Pritam Sing Committee raised his voice with the following statement that *“The boundary between Bihar and West Bengal in this reach is under dispute.”* After that two decades have elapsed since the Pritam Singh Committee submitted its report, the problem remains unresolved. Meanwhile about 50,000 populations have temporarily settled on the Bihar side bank having unauthoritative identity. Interestingly the district map of Malda published in 1994 by SOI depicted the border as unauthenticated. The procedure to fix and reconstruct international boundary is something different. During 1948 the *Algot Bagge* Commission inferred that *“After taking into consideration all relevant questions, the award was declared making the boundary in this area fixed. At the time of making award, mid-stream of the river Ganges from a point little below Farakka to the point where Mathabhanga takes off from the river Ganges was taken to be the boundary between Murshidabad and Rajshahi. It was declared that irrespective of the changes of the course of the river the boundary should remain fixed.*

With the passage of time these islanders are being distinctive in existence and mental alienation of the questioned population is making them mentally distant from their motherland as many of them are in search of new rationing of Jharkhand state. The alliance of such disenchanting people in terms of brotherhood and matrimonial relations can be a reason of loss of good cultivators' democratic supporters, and citizen of the state and that ultimately will affect the strength of human resource of the state. The initiative of district administration is not even satisfactory except campaign to request them to return back to the rehabilitation quarters within the district. The last attempt on the part of West Bengal Government was to conduct census survey in 2001 at fewer location of the islands without which no avowedly formed team work made them rescued. Presently the residents are neither the subject of West Bengal nor the subject of Jharkhand. These nowhere destitute have been termed as 'Neo-Refugee' in their own homeland. Now major parts of the islands are physically connected to the Udhua C. D. Block of Jharkhand (Sahebganj district). Any delayed reorganization of

these areas will also pose political protests associated with provoking agencies of vested interests(*table 7.16*). The man-Land ratio of these indecision- population has been set-up at various danger levels as mentioned below:

Table 7.16 Man–Land Ratio of ‘indecision population’ of Charlands.

Danger Level category	Total area affected (ha)	Total Population affected	Ratio 1:1 standard	Explanation for danger Levels
Danger Level 1	438	36427	0.01 Low	Realluviated (Fully), areas have been appeared after phases of inundation but in high demand though not claimed or captured.
Danger Level 2	11659	35709	0.33 moderate	Engulfed(Partly),continuously loosing and to be waiting for reappearance
Danger Level 3	3344	5604	0.60 High	Inundated, most helpless victims having acute scarcity of shelter, normally the ‘man of nowhere’

Source: Analysis of census Abstract, 2001.

On the basis of the above table the victims in the danger level 3 are in high magnitude in terms of ratio than danger level 2 and 3.

Conclusion

Still the problem is lying with the social framework of the affected areas of Diara and is increasing day by day towards more vigorous situations and future projection is really not very secured as there is serious possibility of the victim community to be redefined after any further inter-state resettlement of territory owing to be held. The most vulnerable situation was noticed during 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and the moderate intensity during 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. After 2007 the most seriously affected area i.e. Panchanandapur was found more or less unaffected and presently the channel at this bank is retreating keeping abandoned loop channels. Actually aesthetic loss assessments in terms of macro scale is needed to clarify and establish the losses of the destitutes.

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