

ROLE OF PARTICIPATORY SUPERVISION IN RESTORATION OF LIVELIHOOD OF AFFECTED PERSONS: CASE STUDY OF BHAIRAB BRIDGE PROJECT, BANGLADESH

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Abstract: The paper evaluates the role of participatory supervision of resettlement and social development plans in Bhairab Bridge Project. The project area was semi-urban in nature, located in river ports and business hubs. The author uses data collected from the field, evaluation reports coupled with first-hand work experience in the project. The significant impacts of the project included dislocation of SMEs, mobile vendors, loss of business and employment. DAC-OECD guidelines were adopted in designing the Social Action Plans (SAPs). International and local specialists were involved in the planning and close supervision of SAP implementation. The INGO and project management were assisted by the social development specialists in dealing with critical implementation issues. Supervisors played a significant role in development of resettlement market by the EA. Varieties of businesses have emerged in the area where more than 10,000 people are working. The participatory supervision was a high point in SAP implementation.

Keywords: SAP, Livelihood, Bhairab Bridge, INGO, Resettlement Market, Vulnerable, Supervision

INTRODUCTION

Bhairab Bridge is one of the largest projects in Bangladesh opened to traffic in 2002. The project is partially funded by DFID through grant and loan from a bank of the UK. The Roads and Highways Division (RHD) was the Executing Agency (EA) of the project. The bridge established a fixed link over the River Meghna for improvement of road traffic network system between the Capital City of Dhaka and the north eastern region of the country, mainly the Sylhet city. Bhairab and Ashuganj at the two ends of the bridge are important river ports and business hubs with semi urban in nature (Figure 1). Bhairab and Ashuganj share a thriving local economy

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characterized by railway and river transport businesses and new industrialization, particularly in Ashuganj. Generally, both Bhairab and Ashuganj are considered as national life lines for storage and distribution of rice, fertilizer, molasses, cements, stones, sand, coals and other industrial products. Large number of porters is employed as casual /contract laborers for loading and unloading to and from boats, rails and trucks. Numerous trucks and boat booking agencies exist on both sides of the river. Before constructing the bridge vehicles queuing for the ferry caused major bottlenecks on both ferry *ghats* (landing areas), and a sizable commercial sector had developed to serve the needs of waiting passengers and drivers. This ranged from restaurants, fruit whole and retail sellers, and mobile vendors to children selling water to travelling passengers.

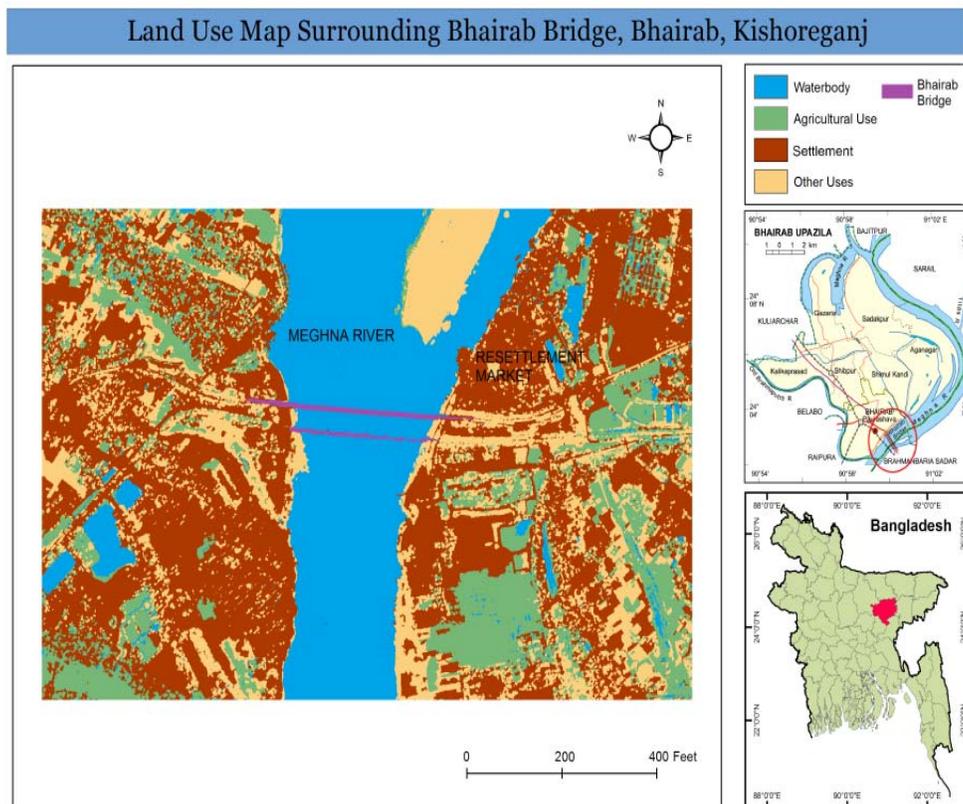


Figure 1: Location of Bhairab Bridge and River Ports

The significant impacts of the project included loss of homestead properties, dislocation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs)/mobile vendors, loss of employment/earning of wage laborer, porters and workers of rice mills (Halcrow and BCL, 1999). Most of the affected households/entities were living on and/or using government land. Among the affected households only 46 had to move out by losing

their residential structure and rest of them lost some homestead property but did not need to move out from their residence. All these households are male headed. More than 92% owner and employees of the affected SMEs/mobile vendors is male. All the porters are male and majority of the rice mill workers are female. By considering all the affected people about 80% are male and rest is female. Table 1 presents a profile of the project-affected persons.

Table 1: Profiles of the Project Affected Persons

Area	Household (No)	Owners of SME/Mobile Vendors(No)	Employees of SMEs (No)	Porters (No)	Rice Mill Workers (No)	Country Boat operators /Others (No)	Total
Ashuganj	145	400	616	596	147	86	1990
Bhairab	83	277	421	240	72	42	1135
Total	228	677	1037	836	219	128	3125

Source: Compiled from Social Evaluation Report, 2002, Halcrow and BCL, 1999

A Social Action DAC-OECD Guidelines were adopted in designing the Social Action Plan (SAP) in two phases, SAP I and SAP II. Plan I (SAP I) was prepared for mitigation of the impacts, particularly payments of compensation, replacement value for assets acquired and assistance as well as resettlement of the SMEs and affected households. SAP II involved implementation of Social Development Plan (SDP) dedicated to income restoration, economic rehabilitation and poverty reduction designed particularly for vulnerable APs including women and other vulnerable groups – both directly and indirectly affected by the project. The construction work took about three years. The SAP was implemented through an NGO (INGO) over a period of more than four years.

Based on joint verification by EA, Deputy Commissioner (DC), and INGO during implementation phase and updated data, 446 directly affected and 2679 indirectly affected persons (APs) were identified (Halcrow and BCL, 2002). Those affected are considered entitled persons (EPs) for compensation and resettlement assistance. The EPs are distinguished as titled owners (i.e., directly affected) and non-titled (i.e., indirectly affected) persons. The land titled owners are eligible both for cash compensation under law (CCL) through the DC and additional grants through the INGO, while non-titled persons are eligible for grants, based on the types of losses. All additional grants both for titled and non-titled persons were paid directly to the EPs by INGO.

International and local Safeguard Specialists were involved in the planning and close supervision of SAP implementation (Khatun 2015). The INGO and project management were assisted by the social safeguard/development specialists over the SAP implementation in dealing with critical implementation issues, including redefining and identification of APs, livelihood restoration by adopting appropriate mechanisms based on time demand, field situation, suggestions provided by independent monitor, and participatory monitoring by stakeholders. Participatory supervision by the safeguard specialists added a great value in restoration of the livelihood of the vulnerable APs of this project.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this paper is to (i) evaluate the role of participatory supervision of resettlement and social development plans in addressing social safeguard issues and enhancing the restoration process of APs' livelihood in the Bhairab Bridge Project; (ii) evaluate the overall achievement and experience of SAP implementation to draw out recommendations for future implementation strategies of safeguard issues in any infrastructure projects.

SOURCES OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY

For the present study both primary and secondary data sources are being used. In addition to that first-hand work experience in the project facilitated the researcher to highlight detail strategies adopted during different stages of the implementation of the project. The primary sources are mainly field survey in the project area in different time period and finally in September 2015. Various groups of people were interviewed including the local general people, business communities, affected people and representatives from INGO and executing agency (RHD). Social evaluation report is the principal secondary source of information along with other reports. A narrative evaluation is being done with support of some statistical data. Some case studies are also being used to give lively description of the situation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role of Participatory Supervision

The safeguard/development specialists who were involved in designing and planning initially with the SAP I continued as supervisors during implementation stage. The

implementation started with planned SAP I and SAP II developed at the later stage, mainly after the half way of the SAP I implementation with incorporation of field level experience, evaluation report and feedback from the stakeholders on various critical issues. Allocation of fund for social development in the SAP I budget was a remarkable guiding force in developing SAP II dedicated to income restoration, economic rehabilitation and poverty reduction. Supervisors played important role in resolving some critical implementation issues in response to time demand, field situation, monitoring report and participation of stakeholders in implementation of SAP I and livelihood restoration for poverty reduction was done through adopting appropriate mechanisms in SAP II (CCDB, 2004).

Participatory supervision all along the implementation period helped the implementation team members to perform their role with reasonability and facilitated in resolving some critical issues, many of which were not perceived or addressed at the time of designing or planning. Some important ones are presented below:

Compensated Laborers/Porters Involved with Affected SMEs but not the Regular Employee

By following practices in other resettlement plans in different projects in Bangladesh and to follow a transparent strategy to compensate the livelihood losers only the wage earners (employed as wage laborer at least for six month time in the affected SMEs) were entitled to get assistance for loss of livelihood in SAP I (Khatun, 2000 and 2005). In the project area the laborers/porters were not the wage earners but used to work on contract basis under the leadership of labor leaders (Sardar) for loading and unloading the commodities to and from the boats. Naturally they were not covered under the list of affected people during conducting census to prepare the SAP I but the list of the porters was collected informally from their association at the time of conducting the census. During implementation these porters/ laborers jeopardized the implementation process, made argument with the concerned authorities and proved that their livelihood was totally dependent on these affected SMEs. By this time the SAP I was approved by the ministry. Eventually with the help of the supervision consultants as the expert in the field the concerned authority made appropriate amendments and made compensation to 836 laborers/porters for the loses of their livelihood by adopting necessary strategy by using the list of contract porters/laborers collected earlier from the association.

Compensated Affected Women Rice Mill Workers

Some rice processing infrastructures/mills were affected in the project area. It was designed in the SAP I such a way that at the time of implementation the land owners

and lessees of the rice mills are to be identified from the list prepared during census as well as verified/updated by land ownership as well as lease documents. On the other hand as the workers do not have any document but they are employed through verbal agreement, the workers' list prepared during census is the document to identify the affected persons. At the time of implementation it is found that in practice the infrastructures/mills are usually leased out to the lessee/operators by following the Bengali calendar (starts in April). The lessee operates business with their own full set of staffs including majority of the women laborers. In the project area the census to enlist all the affected people including the laborers were conducted in the month of November in 1998 and implementation of the project started in November 1999. In April 1999 with the change of lease agreement all the people involved in the rice mills were changed. The approved list of affected people as listed in 1998 with the approved SAP I was in hand of the concerned authority. Based on the documents new lessee and owner of the mill or owner of the property were recognized as per design of SAP I but not the wage laborers. As a result the real affected wage laborers at the time of implementation were not in the list. At the time of implementation it is realized that the real affected people need to be compensated but not the listed ones who are not practically affected by the project. The owners of the rice mill, lease holders, as well as affected laborers raised their voice on this issue. In response to this situation the supervision consultants advised the implementing agency to make an amendment in the implementation process. The mill owner will submit a list of affected wage earners (not exceeding the total number). The documents will be signed by concerned affected mill owners/lessee and local public representatives. By adopting necessary steps all the real affected laborers mainly women laborers were compensated under the guidance of the supervisors.

Ensuring APs' Employment in Project

According to the contract the construction contractors were supposed to employ the APs in the project work, specially the unskilled ones. Like any other project the contractor was reluctant to employ these APs for various reasons. The INGO was instructed by the supervisors to provide the list of potential workers with time to time up date and those lists were presented to the contractor by the supervisor in the monthly meetings to comply with the agreement. This facilitation and created pressure compelled the contractor to employ at least some of the APs in the project work. After completion of the project it is observed that many of the unskilled workers worked in Bhairab bridge project become skilled workers in other similar projects in the country as well as abroad (Khatun, 2009).

Addition of One Tunnel in the Design for Easy Movement

During phase one a tunnel under the access road of the bridge was included in Ashuganj side by evaluating the pre-project traffic flow to facilitate people to communicate across the road as continuation of earlier practice. After the construction of one tunnel it was found that the tunnel was very narrow to carry the traffic. Local people started agitation and demanded additional tunnel after numbers of accident occurred. In response to the local demand and resolve the communication problem the supervisors convinced the executive agency as well as the contractor to construct another tunnel. This additional tunnel was over and above the approved budget (CCDB, 2004).

Facilitated the Pedestrians to use the Bridge by Providing Stairs in Important Locations

It was mentioned in the SAP I to allow the pedestrians to use the bridge to cross the river as it was envisaged that the ferry to cross the vehicles and passengers as well as small boat services to cross the river would be closed with opening of the bridge for traffic. Later on through participation with the local people it was realized that to use the bridge the pedestrians would have to walk at least 4 times than the real distance. In this situation with the participation of the local stakeholders the supervisors could convince the contractor to add two stairs in the design of the bridge and constructed in two sides of the river in appropriate location to facilitate pedestrians and optimize the use of the bridge by the local people (Halcrow and BCL, 2002).

Facilitated People to Continue Using River for Bathing and Washing Purpose

During implementation it was observed that people, especially women from far away like Bhairab town (at least 3 km) come to the riverbank early in the morning to wash their cloths and bathing. According to the local people river water is good for washing cloth and bathing though they have supplied water from the municipality authority. Supervisors brought this issue to the EA and contractor and assured to have facilities to continue using river water after completion of the project. The contractor provided stairs in some specific locations along the river protection embankment by keeping in mind of the safety of the embankment as well as comfortable use of river for washing and bathing purpose. By developing the stairs people of the vicinity were facilitated to continue using river for their personal purposes as well as protected the infrastructure developed by the project to protect the river bank as well as the bridge.

Encouraged APs to Lodge their Grievances

The supervisors made it sure that INGO facilitated the APs to lodge the grievances. About 2,000 grievances were lodged and resolved within stipulated time. Many of the

aggrieved persons were not AP even. Initially about 1,600 APs (directly and indirectly affected) were identified and listed in SAP I. With the facilitation of grievance lodging and resolution and taking other steps total number of APs raised to 3125. The supervisors also maintained close liaison with the members of the GRC, mainly the representatives of the APs, especially woman representative of AP as well as of local government and other local public representatives in this regard. This grievance redress mechanism reduced tension among the APs and earned confidence on project authority. The grievance redress mechanism was additional mechanism to pay all the porters and women rice mill workers to receive their grants/assistance. Some other people who were affected indirectly also received their compensation. However, with efficient and effective supervision some fraudulent claims of some influential people of the locality were evaluated and resolved through this GRC.

Adapted Strategy during Implementation for Payment of Additional Grants

By realizing the practical situation during implementation supervision consultants recommended to arrange additional grants on top of the approved grants in SAP I for the commercial plot losers like reconstruction grant, grant for reestablishment of business, grant for reestablishment of utility services, facilities to receive the leased money etc. Initially it was assumed that some commercial plots need not to be relocated for the project, rather they would continue their business in the same manner as they were doing. As a result additional grants were not allocated for these APs. But later on it is realized that they need to relocate to reorient their activities with the developed infrastructure facilities like closing down of some streets, construction of new roads, temporary shifting of business for making the ferry operational during the construction period etc.

Establishment of Rehabilitation Market

A piece of land was acquired for the project for various purposes along the bank of the river and beside the affected market area in Ashuganj. During design phase the safeguard specialist proposed to develop a market to resettle the affected SMEs when most of them had to displace from their location during implementation phase and would not be able to go back to their original location. Initially the Project Director (PD) of the EA was reluctant about the decision. However, during the implementation with strong recommendation of the supervision consultants and demand and participation of the AP in different implementation activities, mainly the business losers, Resettlement Advisory Committee (RAC) and INGO finally the rehabilitation market was developed with 581 plots along with all civic amenities like electricity,

road facilities, water and sanitation facilities. This is the first established Rehabilitation Market (RM) for the displaced business and enterprise in any development project in Bangladesh (Khatun 2009). The entire project affected owners of SMEs/mobile vendors of Ashuganj were eligible to entitle a plot in the newly established market named as “*Punorbashon Bazar (PB)*”.

Five different plot size has been designed in the “*Punorbashon Bazar*” in Ashuganj area. Size of the allocated plots was categorized according to the total compensation money received from the project. As a result the large and established SMEs losers received larger plot size and all the vendors got small size of plots. However, the location of commercial plots was selected through open lottery system. People from local administration, RAC members, beneficiaries and project authority were present in identifying the plots for respective allottees. In collaboration with the project authority the supervision consultations identified and designed appropriate mechanism of titling as well as transferring and operation of these plots. All the plots are allocated by RHD on 99 years lease basis to the concerned APs. The APs would pay a monthly rent to RHD for these plots based on the size of the plot fixed by RHD. The plot owners are not allowed to sell or transfer the ownership of the plots within ten years of allotment. After the embargo period the transfer of ownership is allowed but certainly with the permission of RHD. To make the market sustainable a Market Committee (MC) is being formed with the help of the INGO. All civic amenities provided by the project would be maintained by the MC. For large scale development like development of embankment, improve and widen the road the government would be asked to do that.

However, most of the affected SMEs/mobile vendors of Bhairab area did not have to displace from the location but continued the business, in fact had more business during the implementation period with continuation of ferry as well as additional laborers working in the area. But they lost business after opening the bridge. As they did not have to move out from their location the project authority did not establish any market for the affected owners of SME/mobile vendors of Bhairab.

Addressed Gender Issues, 28 Plots for Women in Punarbashon Bazar

The whole implementation team was very sensitive and active to address the gender issues and strong supervision also facilitated that. During the census the SME owners did not recognize ownership of property by any women member of the family and based on the information provided by the existing SME owners no women owner or shareholder of the SMEs were recorded. But during the implementation, through different processes like submission of succession certificate used to establish the

inheritance right of the legally owned affected property to the DC it is identified that 28 women have full or partial ownership in different SMEs. Despite the opposition of the existing owner of the SMEs these women were given appropriate compensation and allotted commercial plots in the *Punorbashon Bazar*. All the affected women, especially the vulnerable women received special attention all along from design through implementation of the project.

Community Infrastructures Constructed

As part of SAP design community infrastructures like mosque, temple was constructed in the project area. However, supervisors had good role in relocating the affected structure on due time. Supervisors also monitored the timely completion of these structures like completion of temple before *Durga puja*, the principal worship time of the year. One temporary mosque was established to continue the prayer until the designed one was complete. On the other hand sensitive religious festivals were taken into cognition in timing the relocation of affected mosque and keep harmony in the society. The relocation programs were also synchronized with the contractor so physical intervention was not affected. One language monument (*Shaheed Minar*) of a school was affected by the project by accident. Supervisors monitored and made it sure that the monument is rebuilt before 21st February, the language movement day and mitigated the local agitation to continue the work.

Vulnerable APs Identified Before Closing Ferry in SAP II

To design the SAP II the vulnerable APs (directly and indirectly) were identified through conducting a census under the supervision of the supervision consultants. It was perceived that after completion of the ferry most of the vulnerable people including vendors, water sellers, porters, boat operators and laborer/wage earners in the restaurants would lose their livelihood and become vulnerable. Over the period of construction work their numbers would be changed. To make sure all of them are covered and nobody can make false claims the survey was conducted while they were in operation but at the phase when ferry was about to be closed.

Provided Supervised Grants as Development Fund in Two Stages to the Vulnerable APs with Investment Plan

The INGO formed groups with the vulnerable APs under the supervision of the safeguard specialists. The project identified vulnerable households by following national vulnerability level in terms of monthly income per household. They were informed that they will receive grant of total Tk 10,000 to reestablish or improve their livelihood. Majority of the vulnerable APs opined to utilize the grant money for

establishing or improving their business. The eligible APs were asked to submit a short business plan with the help of INGO (if necessary). The grant was provided in two steps under the supervision of the INGO. After giving the initial money (Tk 3,000) their performance was monitored and guided by the INGO for optimum utilization of the money. Later on rest money (Tk. 7,000) was provided. Later on by the end of 2005 it was identified that about 95 percent of them could make use this money optimally (Khatun, 2009).

Provided Appropriate Short Term Skill Training

The supervisors insisted the INGO to provide short skill training to the vulnerable APs. It was not part of the contract of INGO. This skill training was organized based on the demand and business plan of the APs. This skill training program, specially the training on account keeping helped them to establish and running their own business to a great extent.

Present Status of APS

In 2015 the *Punorbashon Bazar* (PB) or Rehabilitation Market (RM) in Ashuganj is now the leading market in the locality, business flourished, income enhanced remarkably. Varieties of businesses have emerged in the area and more than 10,000 people are working in these business hubs. However, people do not want them to identify as member of *Punorbashon Bazar* as they feel downgraded in the society and social stigma as majority of the shop owners were vendors. So they now call this market as Ashuganj Ferry Ghat Market.

In the PB majority of the shops are fertilizer shops followed by cement, pesticide, restaurants/food store. Only 30 percent of them run their own shop. Rests are rented out, mostly to the non-local people. Many of the owners of large shops are doing business in other big cities of Bangladesh like Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet. Only 40 percent local people are involved in business here while other 60 percent people are migrants from different parts of Bangladesh. Majority of them are from northern region of Bangladesh. This was unlike before the construction of the bridge. This can be explained by the fact that People of Ashuganj and Bhairab had long experience of business compared to the northern part. With the facilitation of improved communication facilities they have either moved to big cities or they are involved with other businesses with high capital investment rather than having small shop in the market. On the other hand with the opening of Jamuna Bridge in 1998 people from northern region moved to different parts of the country and may be found this market suitable to start small scale business.

Over period of time local economy has enhanced and many new infrastructures are coming up with all different kind of services. This PB with the port facilities is still being used as the gateway of transition of the commodities. It is observed that after closing down of the project the liaison between RHD and the plot owners has been reduced. The plot owners have transferred their ownership without permission of RHD and payment of rent is not regular either. On the other hand for the uncertainty of the ownership of the land long term investment on these plots for development of infrastructures is very poor.

Many plot owner sold their plot/shop without permission of RHD, migrated to other places like Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet city in search of better livelihood. According to the local people this is their upward social mobility facilitated by the project. The women owner of the plots has sold their plots to the local people immediately after the completion of the construction of the market. At present some women in the PB area only work in the restaurants but many women use this market as transit or storage for their business. Business in this market is better in winter season. According to the local business community 5 percent porters /people (vulnerable APs) who received the grant failed to utilize the grant money and their status is being deteriorated. In other words majority of them could utilize the money and improved their condition. However, according to some respondents the economy collapsed in this area due to this project. The compensation received by the affected people wasn't sufficient to start a new business.

On the other hand in Bhairab side the former ferry *ghat* is used as port for transporting various types of commodities like coal, sand, rod, rice etc. More than 5 thousand porters work here year round. The transport agencies of this side are having more business than before. Economic condition of the people involved with transport agency has improved. Many truck drivers are now having transport business and have agencies to carry commodities all over the country.

Most of the vulnerable APs who received grant left the area with improved economic condition as they came from other parts of the country. The restaurant business was very attractive in Bhairab side but after the construction of the bridge this business has not flourished as most of the present customers are laborers. All the fruit business has converted to transport business.

In 2015 the government has developed an inland river port in Ashuganj as part of treaty with India to facilitate Indian Transit Route through Inland Water Transport Authority (IWTA). Through government's system of interdepartmental exchange a portion of the land on the river bank in Ashuganj including part of the PB with eight shops RHD has transferred the land to IWTA. Neither RHD nor IWTA did

compensate for the loss of shop but simply asked to leave the area or in some cases evicted them. The shop owners tried to uphold their right but failed as it is a priority project of the government and the shop, with the influence of local politics market committee could not play their role in protecting their right and the shop owners did not pay any rent to RHD after completion of the project. It is also true that as the ownership of the shops has been changed without any proper permission of RHD, there is no properly maintained track record with RHD.

Case Studies

Afzal Hossain

(Owner of Fuel Business) (Rented shops in Punorbashon Bazar in Ashuganj)

Afzal Hossain is a fuel businessman who came from local village called Panesshor. He sells fuel both to local farmers and to the engine boats & cargo ships. He has also links with the dredging companies and they buy bulk amount of fuel. As a dealer he brings oil from ‘Padma Oil Company’ by this river. He also rented in some few more shops in this market and uses them as storage houses. He is doing business here for over 4 years. He moved to this location because business here is much better. Before coming here his shop was situated in Ashuganj Bazar. Now there are 5-6 fuel shops in this market including the shop of Afzal Hossain. This fuel business flourishes in rainy season because with more water comes with more ships and boats.

Formerly he was a simple worker in a Mitali transport industry and was labor leader/Sardar of the local workers. He is also one of the recipients of the compensation money. He received 14,000 taka in total. The then all the workers nearly 80 men received the compensation money under his supervision. Among them 4-5 people have established business in this Feri Ghat to his knowledge and some used up the money for family establishment and development.

The original owner of this shop is Jahir Member, lives in a Charcattor Teckpara. One of his sons is Superintendent of Police and other two live in London. Mr Jahir owns three more shops in this market. Afzal Mia pays 28,000 taka per year for this shop and he paid his rent in advance to the owner till 2018. He does not have any idea whether the owner of this shop pay any rent to RHD or not.

The president of the market Committee resolves economic disputes among the businessman since these kinds of business are dependent on dues and loans. President of the MC is elected every two years through election. As part of clean sanitation program few toilets were built in this area but these are almost all useless and closed

rather people uses toilets of the local mosque. These toilets are a great concern since thousands of people passes by this port every day.

This is one of the busiest areas in this region. This port helps transfer fertilizer, rice, wheat, cement etc. On a full working day at least 10-12 different cement company ships anchors here and unloads goods. One of the concerns of Afzal Hossain is that this market might be engulfed by the Indian Transit Route if proper mitigation measure is not taken.

Bacchu Mia

(Owner of three shops in the Punorbashon Bazar in Ashuganj)

Bacchu Mia a 44 years old local businessman, his father received allotment of a shop in the Punorbashon Bazar because he lost his previous tea stall in an open space in the construction process of the Bridge. But the plot was very small so he exchanged it with someone else with additional money and rented in another larger shop alongside the road. Now Bachhu Mia is operating these. During the bridge construction his father was the owner of the shop and as workers of the shop Bachhu Mia received 2,400 taka once and later 10,000 taka as grant.

During the construction of Bhairab Bridge his father owned a tea stall alongside the main road and daily income was 1,000 taka. Now Bachhu Mia owns 3 shops in the market and the income per shop is a bit higher than before. He thinks that before the bridge all the people used the port to cross the area and it was a stoppage where people used to rest and the area was far more crowded with people from different districts but now only local people uses this port and peoples from other area uses the road to pass by rather use it as a stoppage. In his three shops nearly 10 people works among them one is a woman.

He leads a better life now with his family, also enjoys the modern facilities like television, fridge, cable line, clean sanitation. Without the compensation money they would not be able to survive, whereas the money gave them a chance for a fresh start. And with the money he again started a tea stall in the market area and expanded his business from tea stall to a restaurant and then a shop for fire wood.

Overall he thinks that this bridge has brought a positive change in this area and he is happy to be a part of something that is good for the country.

Mr. Safikul Islam

(Transport Businessman in Bhairab Side)

Safikul Islam is a businessman who has an office just on the Feri Ghat Road in Bhairab on the bank of the river. He is the owner of both Transport Agency and Coal

Import-Export agency. His father came here before the initiation of the project as a day labor. Mr. Islam was a transport worker and now he is a successful owner of two of his own established businesses.

There used to be wholesale fruit market here, where businessman from different areas used to bring fruits via small boats and cargo boats. Hardly over 1,000 people used to work here but nowadays after the boost of coal and transport industry nearly 10,000 people work here on peak season and more than 2,000 workers on off peak season. Nearly 25 percent of the workers come here from outside this region, mainly from northern region.

Mr. Islam was a general worker in a transport agency back in 2002 and now with gathered experiences he established his own transport business. Here the transport business is related with the coal business. Other than coal, Brick, Rod, Cement, Fruit business also uses the transport facility. According to Safikul Islam, they used to import coal from India but now they import coal from South Africa, Indonesia and even from Australia. He has invested more than Tk. 15 million in his current business.

Utilizing all the modern facilities Mr. Safikul Islam is living a modern life with his family. He also emphasizes on education as a result he managed to send all four of his children to educational institutions.

Ms. Shamsunnahar

(Involved with Home based Income generating Activities in Ashuganj)

Ms Shamsunnahar, a widow with three children used to work in the rice and fish market as casual labor in Ashuganj before the project. She received compensation for the loss of her wage as well grant as Vulnerable AP. She has invested all her money and now raising livestock and poultry in her village home in Ashuganj. By this time she has repaired her house and all her children are grown up and have their own family. She mentioned that similar to her many poor people got support from the project to develop them. Many women like her also improved their condition by utilizing the grant money and knowledge earned thorough training and participating in the process of project implementation. However, most of the women who got allotment of shop in the market have sold their plot. She opined that the project brought very positive benefit to the locality. Now the local economy has flourished with all different types of support services like hospital, good schools and improved transport facilities. Law and order situation has improved but presence of large number of non local people in the area has changed the social harmony.

Shamsunnahar was a member of GRC for Ashuganj side as representative of woman AP. She participated in all the GRC meetings as well as many consultation meetings. Now she is known as empowered women in her community. In terms of participation in the GRC meetings she opined that GRC members should have some incentive to participate in the meetings to make the approach more effective.

CONCLUSION

Timely relocation and resettlement of the SMEs at the PB and restoration of livelihood of the vulnerable APs are the main hallmarks of the SAP experience. The participatory supervision all along the implementation period by the supervision consultant was a high point in successful SAP implementation. This should be strongly emphasized and mandated in any future project implementation strategy for sustainable rehabilitation and development. However, to uphold the right of the shop owners RHD should have some arrangement through some internal management may be through their in house safeguard division.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and analysis following recommendations are made for future projects:

- During implementation phase of the infrastructure projects supervisors should be employed for full time, specially the local one. The local supervisor should have thorough knowledge of the social live and livelihood of the local people.
- It would be better if the project planner can be employed as supervision consultant during implementation.
- Innovative ideas based on feedback from the stakeholders and evaluators should be encouraged at the later stage of the project. It is important to note that time duration between designing and implementation of large project is pretty long. Within this time period the social strategy and parameters and local economy may take a different turn with intervention of the project. So this adjustment time should be taken into cognition for social development of the vulnerable APs.

- Executive Agency (EA) should have some mechanism to uphold or continue the rehabilitation activities to make a project successful and make example for future.
- It is important to have female expert in the team to address the women's issue more attentively. The expert can be the supervisor or key person in INGO or representative of EA.

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