

## CHAPTER 4

### THE VULNERABILITY CONTEXT IN GAIBANDHA DISTRICT: PLACE, PEOPLE AND LIVELIHOODS

Riverine communities in Bangladesh have long been portrayed as the poorest and the most vulnerable, the widespread assumption being that they would not live in such riverine environments provided they had better alternatives. However, the perception held by the local communities who actually inhabit the active flood-plains of Bangladesh is fundamentally different from the views of outsiders. Life stories and accounts suggest that floods, storms and river bank erosion do not appear as catastrophes to them - contrary to the reports of press agencies and development institutions, and to them the above-mentioned hazards are recurring events, forming part of their life-world. People living in these areas are said to “suffer from multiple and very particular forms of vulnerability rooted in the threat of seasonal flooding and erosion” (Broklesby and Hobley, 2003: 897). Moreover, increasing population pressure, unequal access to land, a lack of employment opportunities and poverty are constant companions in these communities. As a result, economic and social marginalization has led to spatial marginalization also, but these riverine people have long-fought with an extremely dangerous and violent physical and social environment and so are not just helpless victims of this environment. The concept of vulnerability has been central to the field of hazard research for a long time, and the term ‘vulnerability’ has been variously used, focusing mainly on two opposite poles: weakness or incapability, and capability. Representing the first pole, Cannon defines vulnerability as:

“a characteristic of individuals and groups of people who inhabit a given natural, social and economic space, within which they are differentiated according to their varying positions in society into more or less vulnerable individuals or groups. It is a complex characteristic produced by a combination of factors derived specially (but not entirely) from class, gender and ethnicity”(Cannon, 1994: 19).

This definition labels vulnerable people as weak, passive, pathetic and without the ability to form their own destinies. According to Wisner (2004), this approach is often adopted by NGOs and development agencies concerned with securing targeted development assistance. Another definition of vulnerability – one which emphasizes people’s and society’s capacities, not just their inabilities and insufficiencies – is provided by Wisner et al. (2004: 11):

“The characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a natural hazard (an extreme natural event or process). It involves a combination of factors that determine the degree to which someone’s life, livelihood, property and other assets are put at risk by a discrete and identifiable event (or series or ‘cascade’ of such events) in nature or in society.”

In order to understand the nature and degree of vulnerability, I will adopt both (negative and positive) aspects of vulnerability, and this chapter will analyze the vulnerability situation of the people at my research site (Char Kalasona and Uria villages in Gaibandha District) by using two models: the Pressure and Release model (PAR) and the Access Model suggested by Blaikie et al. (Blaikie et al., 2004: 49). The PAR model focuses on the root causes (socio-economic conditions) and dynamic pressures (trigger events such as floods, cyclones or earthquakes etc) while the Access model on the amount of ‘access’ that people have to the capabilities, assets and livelihood opportunities that will enable them (or not) to reduce their level of vulnerability and avoid disaster. Thus, this chapter attempts to portray the holistic view of the people of Char Kalasona and Uria village regarding their lives, describing their socio-economic conditions as well as the physical environment they inhabit.

#### **4.1 Riverine Landscape of Char Kalasona and Uria**

The two villages which I selected in Gaibandha District as my field sites fall under Fulsori Upazila Sub-district and are called Char Kalasona and Uria. Three sides (north, east and south) of Char Kalasona are bounded by three rivers - the Brahmaputra, Jamuna and Manas while on the other side lies the Brahmaputra Right Embankment (BRE). The other village, Uria, is located beside the BRE to the western side.

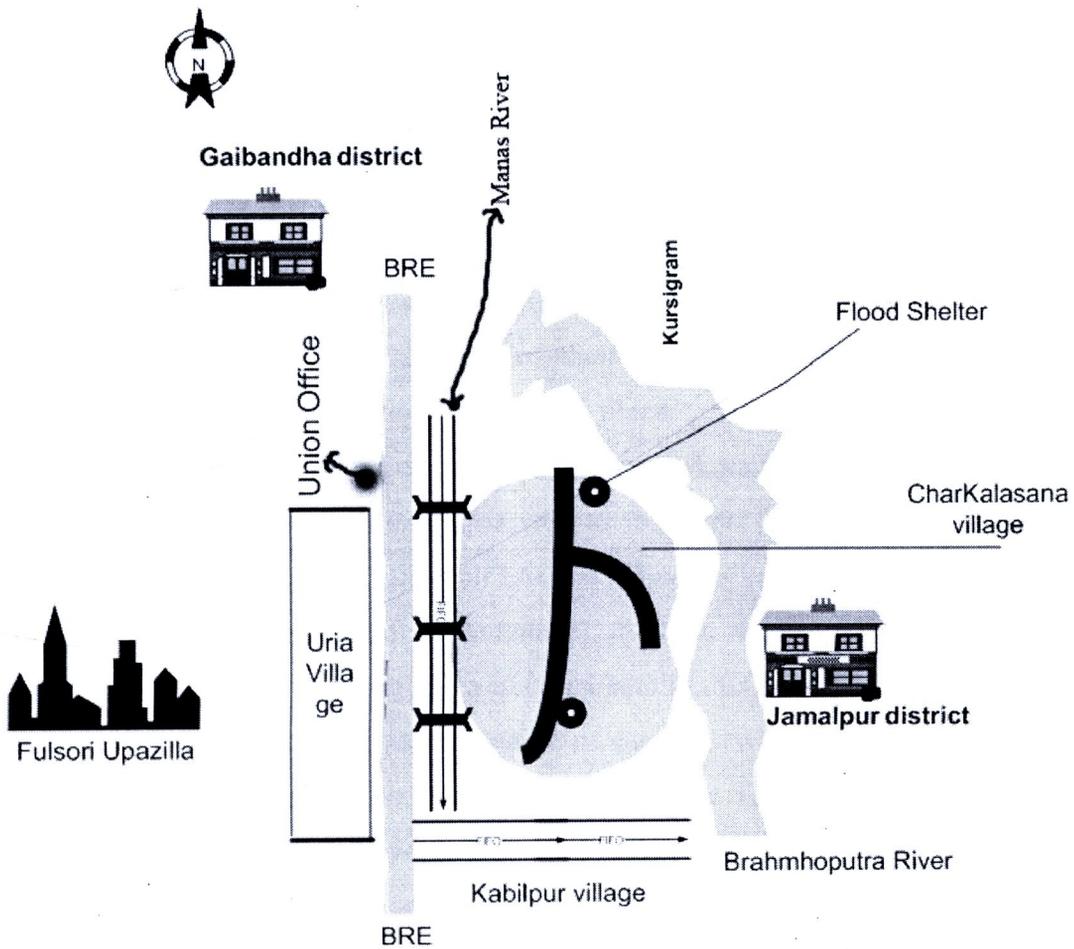


Figure 4.1 Location of the two surveyed villages

The village Char Kalasana lies in an active flood-plain, while Uria falls within an area protected from floods. According to one of my key informants - Mr Abed Ali (popularly known as Doctor Abed Ali, aged 87), the massive flooding of 1962 led the then Pakistan government to build the BRE to protect Gaibandha from recurrent flooding and the BRE was erected in the following year (1963) by the East Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (EPWAPDA). The objective of my choosing these two villages was simply to study the impact of the embankment from both sides. Char Kalasana and Uria villages are located about nine kilometers east of Gaibandha District town and twelve kilometers north of Fulsori Upazila town. The villagers travel to Upazila town or to the district town by rickshaw or on foot during the dry season, and by boat during the wet season or during periods of flooding. The

nearest *hat* (market), named Ketkir Hat, to these two villages is just two kilometers away to the north-west. There are two brick-built and one wooden bridge over the canals beside the embankment, connecting Char Kalasona with Uria, and it is noticeable that these villages are not developed in terms of modern communications. All the roads in these two villages are earthen roads (non-sealed) and to carry heavy items to and from the villages is difficult. Many villagers carry heavy materials on rickshaw-vans and some on the back of their bicycles. No accurate records are available about the history of the names of this place, yet it is known from the elderly in this locality and their ancestors that Maharaj Sir Prodatta Kumar Tagore named this area Uria to facilitate administration as well as to collect taxes under the Patiladah Pargana Sub-district during British rule. As the collectors had to come from far-away Calcutta by plane (*uria* in the local language), the area was so called. According to another version, there was a large area of marshland in this area where *urua* fish were plentiful, so from the *urua* fish, this name of the area was taken, becoming Uria. However, no written documents about this are available. There are three government primary schools, one registered non-government primary school, two *madrashs* (religious schools), twelve mosques and one health clinic in the two villages, and there are two flood shelters in Char Kalasona village, one of which is now used as a shelter for those who have lost their houses due to river erosion. So, apart from flooding, Char Kalasona village is also susceptible to river erosion. Many of my interviewees in Char Kalasona informed me that they have shifted their houses two or three times because of the eroding Jamuna taking their houses. For example, one key informant, Doctor Abed Ali, informed me that his present house is the third he has had in his life. In spite of these two great recurring hazards (floods and erosion), the area is very fertile in terms of agricultural production and some of the farmers can harvest as many as three crops a year. When I went there in November and December 2010 to collect data, I found some fields filled with vegetables and some with beautiful rice crops planted in September/October (locally known *Gangia*). However, as there is a lack of modern and quick communications, no higher education facilities are available there; there are no high schools or colleges in these two villages and very few educated people, or those working in the service industries. Only one or two

NGO workers (some on motorbikes and some on bicycles) visit the villages occasionally. The profile of each village is given below:

Table 4.1 Profile of Char Kalasona village

HH	M	F	Child	Pop.	Pri. School	Relig. School	N	Mos.	Flood Shelter	B	River
485	897	965	1047	2909	02	01	05	04	02	03	03

HH- Household, M- Male, F- Female, N- NGO and B- Bridge

Table 4.2 Profile of Uria village

HH	M	F	Child	Pop.	Pri. School	Relig. School	Mos.	Dam	NGO
227	355	362	500	1217	01	01	03	01	05



Based on a number of criteria, these two villages, and particularly Char Kalasona, are identified as disaster-prone areas by the Upazila and District administrations. As I was new in the area, I consulted with the local Upazila Nirbahi Officer (Upazila administrator) and Upazila Chairman (elected political administrator) regarding the selection of flood-prone sites and both of them suggested to me the site I eventually used, because it is clearly a 'flood-risk' zone. However, according to the chairman of the Uria Union Parishad and one of my key informants, this region was prosperous in the past, with the granaries full of paddy, ponds abounding with fish and the forests filled with flora and fauna. It has been since 1983 that this area has lost its prosperity, mainly due to the continuous pressure of, on the one hand hazards like floods and erosion and on the other, rapid population growth. Now, Uria Union (composed of five villages) is identified as one of the most risk-prone and poorest areas of Bangladesh.

#### 4.2 The Riverine Communities of Char Kalasona and Uria

The previous studies on flood-affected rural communities/peasants in Bangladesh (Islam, 1980, Khan 1977, Paul 1984 and Rashid and Paul, 1987) tend to refer to rural communities there as being “traditionally fatalist” (what will be, will be), “traditionally attached to [the] land in the hazard area”, “disinterested in employment opportunities” and “are reluctant to move”. Although all these statements have one common characteristic: an “unwillingness to change their fate”, I think there is at least some exaggeration in this kind of generalization for communities who have survived despite disasters in the past and still struggle for their sustainability with whatever little they have. Any extreme event such as a flood hazard that disturbs social reproduction and progress, can be viewed in terms of society’s ability to cope with it (Westgate and O’Keefe, 1976; Hewitt, 1983; and Morren, 1983). The people of riverine Bangladesh are fortunate that they do not have to struggle hard to harvest crops - as they have fertile land, but they have had to prove their ability to provide food to a huge population (more than 150 million) from the miserable situation they found themselves in in 1974, when a famine occurred.

A society needs to access resources and wealth through the exploitation of labor, through expropriation and accumulation, and a society that has unbalanced conditions through an uneven distribution of accumulated resources, has weakened forces of production. Society in Bangladesh, whether rural or urban, is egalitarian in principle, and this existing process, so far in Bangladesh, has intensified the presence of unequal resource distribution and of an unequal social structure. The process has a long historical background, in which the actual producers (riverine rural people) were gradually separated from the means of production.

The process of the separation of producers from the means of production was accompanied by a deliberate neglect of agriculture, and the exploitation of agriculture has always been aimed at developing the industrial sector, first during the colonial periods (the British and Pakistan) and then during self-rule since then (Rahman, 1991). The rural sector has received attention only in the form of infrastructure development which has enhanced rural exploitation by transferring resources from rural to urban areas. Rural road construction, the construction of storage facilities, rural electrification and rural banking are such infrastructures that have been

introduced. The technological innovations introduced (especially high yielding variety technology and supporting credit mechanisms) have resulted in resource polarization on the one hand, and increasing pauperization on the other. The irrational exploitation of agriculture and its related neglect has ultimately resulted in increased poverty.

Culturally, most rural communities in Bangladesh are religious in nature, which means that after completing their daily tasks they bless 'Almighty Allah'. They know that they have to work for their livelihoods and do so accordingly, but I think most of them are not far-sighted enough to work in order to save for the future. I have found it to be true that, although apparently they do not have enough resources to rely on during hazards or other unwanted events, they somehow manage the situation by mobilizing the available capitals they have access to, as suggested by Carney. All the people here follow the norms which involve respecting the elders in society, whether intra-household or inter-household. There is a strong unity within the household unit and a sort of coordinating relationship among the households within the *samaj* (composed of a number of households within a certain area of a village). Relationships among the families are based on kinship and neighborhood ties and mutual interests. Kinship making depends primarily on social positions, which are based on resources and power. Another easily noticeable characteristic, which is common to average riverine communities, is simplicity. The people who live there are so explicit in terms of expressing their feelings that outsiders sometimes label them as being 'emotional'. Sometimes, they fall into debt as a result of wishing to satisfy their emotions or desires; for example, Lamia (aged 40), who is a day-laborer and maintains a family of nine, told me that he had sold a cow in order to arrange a marriage ceremony for his eldest girl. A female household head (Morsheda Begum - aged 35) told me that she had sold the ox given to her by Char\_Livelihood Programme (an NGO) in order to build her house. Again, a farmer (Chan Mia - aged 68) who has a family of ten, informed me that he had put one big hectare (.33 of an acre) of land up for mortgage to celebrate the marriage of one of his sons. There are also some superstitious elements to their thinking, such as: "Allah has given mouths, He will give food". My study site is also not free from childhood marriage, discrimination against women, dowries, polygamy and divorce, all of which hint at a society which is not economically well-off or conscious of its rights. Further, some powerful and

clever local political leaders take advantage of the simplicity of the villagers by misguiding and cheating them in times of adversity. Aesop, a young man of 28, told me that he was used by one local political leader for his sown ends – and that when he got involved in a criminal case, the political leader who had used him did not come to his rescue. Thus, there is a saying in Bangla which states that “simple villagers catch a mosquito which flies before them but do not notice (fail to see) an elephant which lies behind them”.

Another very significant aspect of both communities, as elsewhere in Bangladesh, is that the fathers manage the family and in most cases, the women do not get involved in income earning activities. As a result, intra-household dependency is very high, and according to village statistics, there are 2,909 people in 485 families in Char Kalasona village, and out of them, 897 are male, 965 are female and the rest (1047) are children. In Uria village, there are 1217 people across 227 families, of which 355 are male, 362 are female and 500 are children. It is noticeable that the number of children is more than the number of men or women. The actual statistics regarding the income earning and dependent members of the 84 households surveyed are shown in the following table.

Table 4.3 The income-earning and dependent members of the 84 households surveyed in Char Kalasona and Uria villages

<b>Number of Earning Members in the Family</b>	<b>Total Number of Households</b>	<b>Total Number of Dependents</b>
1 (one)	44	228
2 (two)	32	232
3 (three)	8	68

From my observations and the statistics, I found that those households with more income earners are better-off in terms of socio-economic conditions and economically, while those households with a single income earner lag behind and are economically poor.

A society's culture is inextricably related to its economic and political processes, within which a community stands on its own. So, despite the neglect of agriculture as mentioned above, and the subsequent interests of the rich and powerful in terms of investing outside agriculture, land access and ownership is still crucial for the majority of rural communities in Bangladesh. Accordingly, I will now turn to land access and ownership patterns in my study area.

#### **4.3 Land Access and Ownership Patterns in Uria and Char Kalasona Villages**

As the population has increased and the availability of land decreased due to new settlements and construction, there has been a growing pressure in terms of land access and ownership in Bangladesh, and in a country like Bangladesh where manpower is used so intensely, this pressure is most acute in rural communities. In the two study villages, I found that land access and ownership means a lot to the people there. Land ownership gives a person a higher position in society, in addition to resources and capital, and it also enables one to be politically important in the locality. This cultural power of the landowner allows them to become *jotdars* (powerful people in society who settle disputes), so there was, is and probably always will be attempts made by the rich in society to try and monopolize land ownership. According to an estimate by Rahman (Rahman, 1991): (a) Six percent of rural households with land holdings of more than five acres control 45% of cultivable land, (b) sixteen percent of households with farm sizes between 2.5 and five acres control about 34% of the land, (c) thirty percent of households control about 20% of the land for farm sizes between 0.5 and two acres, and (d) about 50% of households control only about 3% of the cultivable, where the farm size is 0 to 0.5 acres.

The average landholding among the households I interviewed in Uria and Char Kalasona is one *bighaa* (0.13 ha). Almost one-third of the households (30 out of 84) do not have any agricultural land at all, about 40 households have land up to 0.5 acres, and the remaining fourteen households (about 16%) control most of the cultivable land, ranging from one acre to even 35 acres. The following table gives details about the ownership of land for the 84 households I surveyed in the study villages:

Table 4.4 Distribution of cultivable land among the households surveyed in Uria and Char Kalasona villages

Farm Size	Number of Households	Percentage of Households (%)
Landless	30	36
Up to .5 acre	40	48
Up to 1 acre	8	9
1 to 35 acres	6	7

The above table shows that 84% of households (the first two rows together) have no or negligible ownership of agricultural land, and that in addition to this, some of the less powerful households do not have access to land they had access to before they lost it to river erosion, for when the lost land emerges again, there are sometimes conflicts over its control. Baqee (Baqee, 1998) and other anthropologists attribute this to the *lathial* system, whereby powerful local leaders or *jottdars* gain control over newly emerging land through occupation by deploying poor landless farmers who are dependent on them for employment and access to land. According to Kabizuddin Sarker (aged 86 and one of the richest men in Char Kalasona), no major disputes have occurred in this village in recent years because the farmers prefer to continue living in the neighborhood and monitor the situation. He also added that problems arise when lost land emerges after a long period of time; however, he said that the poor can enjoy access to the communal land in both Uria and Char Kalasona. The canal beside the BRE is free to all for fishing, except for an area enclosed by a person who has made a home for fish using the branches of trees. Besides this, the poor have access to rivers and other nearby *beels* (large submerged shallow land).

#### 4.4 Livelihoods of the People in Char Kalasona and Uria Villages

The single main source of livelihoods in Char Kalasona and Uria, as elsewhere in rural Bangladesh, is agriculture, with 32 households out of the total of 84 I

surveyed (about 38%) cultivating their own land, and with another 25 households depending on sharecropping and agricultural labor for their main livelihood activities. Fishing, operating boats and other businesses are the other significant sources of income in these two villages, as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Main livelihoods of the 84 households surveyed in Uria and Char Kalasona villages

Livelihood Activity	No. of Households (%)
Agriculture	32 (38)
Agricultural labor and sharecropping	25 (30)
Day-labor	7 (8)
Fishing	6 (7)
Boat operations	4 (5)
Businesses	5 (6)
Services	2 (2.5)
Rickshaw-van driving	2 (2.5)
Domestic help	1 (1)

However, it is important to mention that, apart from those farmers who have sufficient land, others do not depend on a single source of income but rather involve themselves in multiple forms of seasonal employment, as this provides them with a better level of income. For example, some people informed me that they become involved in boat operations during the wet (flooding) season and in the dry season (winter) they drive rickshaw-vans, while others work as labor on road construction plus other development projects. In addition, in the villages in some of the northern districts of Bangladesh, including in Gaibandha, there remains a crisis in farming and farming related activities during the months of August to October. In Bangladesh, this period is known as *monga* (lack of work and subsequently starvation) and it unfortunately coincides with the peak flooding season. About 30% of people (25 households) at my study site who rely on agricultural labor and sharecropping become jobless at this time and are added to the daily-labor group. Almost 80% of the poor

households in my study area told me that, if they cannot find an earning stream in the area, they usually migrate to the district towns and cities in search of work. If the person who migrates is a man, he searches for work in transportation or in garment factories, or becomes involved in pulling rickshaws, while the women either try to get a job in garment factories or work as housemaids. However, the average monthly income for most of the households in both villages is below the poverty level, with the details for the 84 surveyed households shown in the table below.

Table 4.6 Monthly income of the 84 surveyed households in Uria and Char Kalasona

Level of Monthly Income in Bangladeshi TK (US\$)	Number of Houses	Percentage of Houses
Above 50,000 TK (715)	12	14%
30,000 to 50,000 TK (428 - 715)	4	5%
20,000 to 30,000 TK (286 - 428)	20	24%
Below 20,000 TK (286)	48	57%

Cropping patterns in much of Bangladesh are almost identical, and many poor farmers still rely on rain for their cultivation. Over recent decades, the introduction of high yielding varieties (HYV) has brought forth a revolution in terms of the volume of food production, especially of rice, and has played a vital role in meeting the growing demand (to a great extent) of the huge and dense population. For traditional farmers, there are mainly two harvests a year - one in the dry season and another in the wet season, but those farmers who want to produce more may have three harvests a year, cultivating early varieties of *aus*, *amon* or jute between mid-April and early May - harvesting after three months, then transplanting late *amon* at the end of September and harvesting in January. They also cultivate irrigated *boro* or *irri* (rice). Paddy, jute, sugarcane, danicha and mesta are the common crops grown during the wet season, while wheat, maize, chilies, oil-seed, mustard, potatoes, tobacco and different kinds of

vegetable are grown in the dry season. The cropping patterns for the surveyed villages are shown in the following table:

Crops	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aus (rice)				B				H				
Amon (rice)						B					H	
Irri/Boro (rice)	H									T		
Jute (fiber)				B						H		
Dhanicha				B						H		
Mesta (fiber)					B					H		
Wheat			H								B	
Corn			H								B	
Chilies			H								B	
Mustard/oil seeds			H								B	
Potatoes			H								T	
Tobacco			H								T	
Vegetables												

B- Broadcast, T- Transplant and H- Harvest

Figure 4.2 Cropping patterns in the surveyed villages

Other than the crops in the fields, many poor villagers, especially the women, grow various kinds of vegetables in their homesteads and sometimes can earn money by selling the surplus; however, all the farmers in Uria and Char Kalasona admitted to me that they cannot grow without using fertilizers. They also told me that the land has become less fertile, because more and more chemical fertilizers are being used. According to the villagers' information, there are seven irrigation pumps supplying

water to the fields. Previously, the farmers had to pay one-quarter of their crop production to the water supplier but now they have to pay one-third. When I visited Uria and Char Kalasona during November and December 2010, I found many fields filled with a late variety of *amon* locally called *ganjia*, plus some others filled with wheat and vegetables. I talked to some of the farmers in the field and found out that they grow this variety of *amon* every year if the flood waters recede in time. They also told me that in 2010 the flood waters had already washed away their seed-beds three times.

#### **4.5 Housing Conditions and Exposure to Floods**

Housing conditions and the height of houses are crucial matters in terms of exposure to flood hazards, and the houses in Uria and Char Kalasona are not free from danger, because I found that out of the 84 houses surveyed, only one has a cement floor while the rest have earthen floors. Most of the houses in both Uria and Char Kalasona have tin-shed roofs (about 60% of houses), with walls made either of tin or a thin strip of bamboo. The rest of the houses (about 40%) are made of thatched roofs with the walls made of jute-sticks, thatch or reeds. There is no electricity in either of the villages, but the rich and middle-classes have solar power systems in their houses, while the poor rely on traditional lamps and kerosene oil for lighting their houses at night. However, I found that all the households, whether rich or poor, depend on wood, straw, dry leaves and different forest and agricultural products for their fuel. Two contrasting pictures - one showing the poorest house and the other showing the richest in Char Kalasona village - are shown below:



Figure 4.3 the Poorest house in Char Kalasona village



Figure 4.4 the Richest house in Char Kalasona village.

The height of the houses leaves some of them prone to floods, but I observed that one NGO named Gone Unnoyon Kendra (GUK), has helped raise the height of about twenty poor homesteads in the village of Char Kalasona. The poor villagers who have these higher homesteads can grow different vegetables and fruit-trees during the flooding season, so some of the rich people and others are not happy as their homesteads are low level and still prone to floods. The houses in Uria village are a bit safer in the sense that they are within the embankment, but they suffer more if the embankment fails, as happened in 1988 and 1998.

The sanitation system in both villages is not hygienic, and 90% of the houses do not have sanitary toilets. As a result, the villagers have to use *kacha* (not cemented), unhealthy toilets, and during the floods, water mixes with these *kacha* toilets, become contaminated and spreading disease. There have been a lot of programs mentioned in the national media trying to raise awareness about the use of sanitary toilets, but many of the people in Uria and Char Kalasona are still in the dark on this. I asked some villagers about the use of their unhygienic toilets and they told me that they have become used to it. As a result, I found that there is a lack of urgency among them in terms of changing the sanitation system.

As stated before, the village of Char Kalasona is marked out as a flood-prone area, so flooding is common - whether serious or relatively normal for this village. In Uria village, the level of exposure to floods depends on the intensity of the flooding itself. If the flooding is serious and the BRE fails, the situation for the households in this village becomes more miserable than for those in Char Kalasona, because the households in Char Kalasona always prepare themselves to negate the negative impacts of the flooding, whereas those in Uria do not. The people of Char Kalasona challenge the floods each year, while those in Uria suffer from uncertainty in terms of whether they will experience flooding or not. Whether exposed to serious or normal flooding levels, the perception of these people about the floods is mixed, that is, that the floods are beneficial as well as harmful. During my discussions with the individual households or in focus group meetings, I came to know that flooding is a part of their 'life-world'. During the rainy season, all the people expect flooding to occur on their land, but what they really fear is "serious flooding". I asked one of the poorest women in Char Kalasona named Nokila (aged 35) about her perception of the

floods. She reacted by saying “It does not matter to us if there is flood or not because we have the same situation all the time; we have to search for work and search for food”. At the other end, Kabizuddin Sarker, the largest owner of land out of the 84 households I surveyed, feels that normal flooding brings a lot of benefits by increasing the volume of agricultural products as well as cleaning the environment, plus by enhancing soil fertility levels. He also added; however, that serious floods destroy crops, houses, livestock and cause health hazards, sometimes leading to deaths.

#### 4.6 Summary

With the recent developments in studies into ‘vulnerability’ as part of hazard research, the focus is more on people’s ‘capacity’ - that which protects them, rather than on people’s ‘incapacity’ - that which limits them.

Geographically, Uria village is within a protected zone and Char Kalasona village is a flood-prone area, but both suffer from flooding though in different ways and proportions, mainly because the geographical differences between the two villages are very explicit.

People in this area are superstitious, religious, emotional and economically poor, and most of them live from hand to mouth, with flooding and river erosion a part of their life-world. Most of the villagers are simple-minded and are sometimes misguided by the *jottdars* or local political leaders. However, the villagers live in a unified and coordinating society.

Access to resources is limited, and the rich *jottdars* control ownership over and access to land, although the poor have access to communal land such as rivers, canals and *beels*.

The livelihoods of the people in the two villages are agriculture-based, with about 70% of households at the study site directly or indirectly involved in agricultural activities. There is a crisis in terms of single permanent livelihoods in this locality and during the flooding season, especially from August to October, this area suffers from *monga*; however, people engage in multiple, seasonal activities in order to earn a livelihood and survive. As a last resort, the poor migrate to towns and cities in search of work.

The people of Uria face exposure to floods during serious flooding events, while those in Char Kalasona struggle with floods every year as part of their life struggles. During the floods both villages suffer from health hazards in terms of a lack of sanitary toilets.

