RECONNAISSANCE STUDY

Introduction

Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) is implementing a European Union (EU) funded project titled "Collective Action to Reduce Climate Disaster Risks and enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Communities around the Sundarbans in Bangladesh and India", in short CCDRER project, in selected clusters of Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts. DRCSC (India) and Orbicon (Denmark) are two partners of BCAS in this project.

For the implementation of the CCDRER project different methods and tools (Reconnaissance, Census and Baseline Survey and Participatory Vulnerability Assessment) are being used to identify the project areas and program participants for operating proposed activities of the project.

Reconnaissance

Reconnaissance is a basic important work to pin point target group who are the likely beneficiary of the project work. More importantly, reconnaissance reduces risk of mistake in wrong selection of areas and beneficiary. Reconnaissance, in the project, refers to the observation, and information collection, about a specified location and the area around to select an area with target beneficiary for effective implementation of project activities.

For reconnaissance, multi level (4-tier) information collection was done. First Upazillas/Blocks were selected from Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts in Bangladesh and North and South 24 Parganas districts of India. While selecting upazillas/Blocks, several issues were considered. (i) proximity to Sundarban [can be described in distance from Sundarban termed as Sundarban Impact Zone (SIZ)](ii) salinity level (iii) natural disaster proneness (iv) presence of target beneficiary (v) communication situation (vi) presence of community (vii) suitable cluster within high/medium SIZ (viii) avoidance of duplication with other EU funded project (Concern Worldwide) where possible.

Information were also collected from secondary sources like Upazilla/Block level service providers/stakeholders (GO, NGO, others). Meetings and interviews were arranged with upazilla/Block level officials. Based on all the information Union Parishods (Ups)/Gram Panchayets (GPs) in each Upazilla/Block was selected. Once UPs/GPs are selected, village profiling was initiated. Training was arranged for enumerators who conducted village profiles with checklist/questionnaire. The Reconnaissance team took 'transect walk' through target villages and stopped at crucial places and talked to/initiate discussion with villagers about predetermined issues relevant to
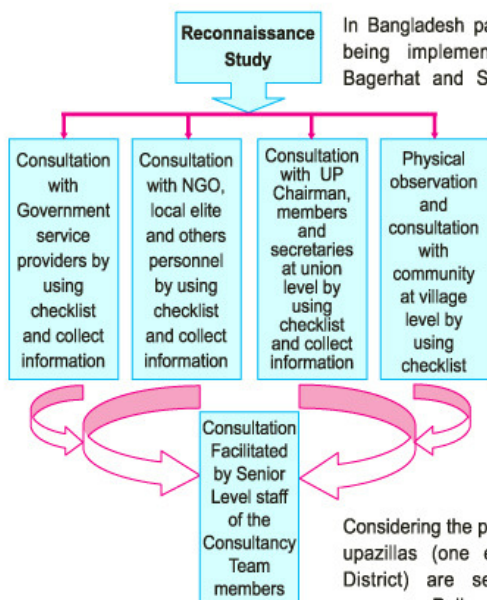
project objective. Village profiling was done by using structured questionnaire in all selected UPs/mouzas/GPs. Thus an exhaustive climate change related natural disaster mapping was done for villages within targeted UPs.

These maps were used for pin pointing locations for target beneficiaries within the village. All the information collected from villages were put in to a matrix to rate those according to selected criteria (social vulnerability, physical vulnerability, presence of target beneficiary, dependency on Sundarban resources for livelihood, impact of climate change related disaster, communication situation etc).

Thus villages were selected which are more disaster prone, that has more people dependent on resources from Sundarban, where more of the target beneficiaries live and suitably located to form a cluster to serve under the project. Based on these information collected in reconnaissance process, a census for villagers will be commissioned.

Area selection from reconnaissance study

In Bangladesh part, the project is being implemented in Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira Districts.

Considering the project objective, 3 upazillas (one each from each District) are selected for this purpose. Paikgacha upazilla of Khulan, Morrelganj upazilla of Bagerhat and Shyamnagar Upazilla of Satkhira districts were selected. Villages were selected in each selected Upazillas by the Reconnaissance Study. In Morrelganj Upazilla- villages under Nishanbaria, Khuolia and Baraikhali UPs are selected for conducting census after completion of reconnaissance procedures. 5 villages in Nishanbaria, 5 villages in Khuolia and 5 villages in Baraikhali were selected for Households Census. Thus a cluster will be chosen consisting villages from Nishanbaria, Khuolia and Baraikahali. This will provide opportunity to work in a cluster which is within 0-10 km of SIZ.

Similarly from Paikgacha Upazilla, 5 villages in Garuikhali, 5 villages in Soladana and 5 villages in Laskar were selected for Census that provides the opportunity to work in a cluster which is within 5-10 km of SIZ. Again, in Shyamnagar Upazilla, 5 villages in Munshiganj, 5 villages in Ramjannagar and 5 villages in Koikhali were selected for Census which falls within within 0-5 km of SIZ.

In Indian part, the project is being implemented in South and North 24 Parganas districts. From the selected districts, 5 blocks were selected for project implementation work, Patharprotima and Basanti Blocks from South 24 Parganas and Sandeshkhali I &II and Hingleganj Blocks from North Parganas district. In Patharprotima Block, 5 villages in Ramganga GP, 6 villages in G Plot and 3 villages in Brajaballabpur were selected for households Census after collecting information from village profiling and careful analysis of disaster risk maps. In the same way, at Basanti Block, 1 village from Basanti, 3 villages from Uttar Mokamberia, 4 villages from Bharatgarh, 1 village from Masjidbati and 2 villages from Jotishpur were selected for household Census. Similarly, from Sondeshkhali I Block, 1 village from Hatgachi was selected for households census and from Sandeshkhali II Block, 6 villages from Bermajur-I and 4 villages from Bermajur-II were selected for households census. At last, 2 villages from Hingalganj, 5 villages from Sandelerbill and 4 from Dulduli were selected from Hingleganj Blocks.