



Photo Essay: "Wave"

by Mohammad Rakibul Hasan

Abstract:

As one of the major victims of anthropogenic climate change, Bangladesh is experiencing variable climatic conditions. Bangladesh is a small, yet overpopulated country in Southeast Asia with a largely agro-based economy. Climatic hazards like cyclone, flood, drought, soil salinity and river erosion are more frequent today. Due to prolonged droughts the temperature is increasing every year at an alarming rate. Sadly, people can't adapt to this rapidly changing climate and are on the brink of socio-economic insecurity. When waves hit, they wash away people's valuable land as well as their livelihoods. After the waves are gone, nothing is left but parched, cracked river-beds.

Permalink: usfca.edu/center-asia-pacific/perspectives/v15n2/hasan

Keywords:

Bangladesh, Brahmaputra, Jamuna, rivers, climate change, climate impacts, erosion, forced migration.

Date of Publication: Vol. 15, no. 2, Spring/Summer 2018

Citation: Hasan, Mohammad Rakibul. "Photo Essay: Wave." *Asia Pacific Perspectives*, Vol. 15, no. 2, 58-70.

Photo Essay: "Wave"

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As one of the major victims of anthropogenic climate change, Bangladesh is experiencing variable climatic conditions. Bangladesh is a small, yet overpopulated country in Southeast Asia with a largely agro-based economy. Climatic hazards like cyclone, flood, drought, soil salinity and river erosion are more frequent today. These two facts contribute to the increasing number of climate refugees who are forced to migrate to the cities, worsening the socio-economic problems there. The barrages built across the rivers inside the border of India have resulted in both flooding and drying of the river beds in Bangladesh.¹ Major rivers like the Padma, Jamuna, Meghna, Brahmaputra as well as smaller rivers in the coastal region suffer massive erosion when the water level rises. Due to prolonged droughts the temperature is increasing every year at an alarming rate. Sadly, people can't adapt to this rapidly changing climate and are on the brink of socio-economic insecurity. The waves – whether present or absent – bring no hope for these people. When they hit, they wash away people's valuable land as well as their livelihoods. After the waves are gone, nothing is left but parched, cracked river-beds.

Mohammad Rakibul Hasan is a documentary photographer and visual artist. He is currently pursuing a Certificate of Higher Education in the History of Art at the University of Oxford and also studying an MA in Photography at Falmouth University. Hasan holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Photojournalism from Ateneo de Manila University and also graduated in Film & Video Production from UBS Film School at the University of Sydney. He has been nominated for many international awards and won several photographic competitions worldwide. His photographs have been published and exhibited internationally. He is based in Dhaka, Bangladesh and represented by Redux Pictures, USA.

NOTES

1. See this report on the impact of Farakka barrage on the human fabric by Manisha Banerjee, on behalf of South Asian Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP). http://sandrp.in/dams/impct_frka_wcd.pdf



Figure 1. After the flood subsides, two friends approach the banks of the Padma River.
Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh
Date: 9 September 2014



Figure 2. Trees and houses are submerged during the flooding of the Padma River.
Location: Padma River, Rajshahi, Bangladesh
Date: 28 August 2013



Figure 3. People had to move away when the flood devastated this area near the Padma River.
Location: Padma River, Rajshahi, Bangladesh
Date: 28 August 2013



Figure 4. Roads, markets and houses are swallowed up by the Padma River during the flood.
Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh
Date: 20 September 2013



Figure 5. A building structure is being removed as the Padma River gets closer.
Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh
Date: 20 September 2013



Figure 6. The Jamuna River is about to take over a village; many of its inhabitants have already left.
Location: Jamuna River, Islampur, Jamalpur, Bangladesh
Date: 5 October 2013



Figure 7. The river's inhabitants are always under the threat of forced migration.
Location: Jamuna River, Islampur, Jamalpur, Bangladesh
Date: 4 October 2013



Figure 8. Cattle in search of food; the flood destroys the green fields of their usual habitat.
Location: Padma River, Rajshahi, Bangladesh
Date: 28 August 2013



Figure 9. Rather than move, many people struggle to live with the flood as they have nowhere else to go.
Location: Padma River, Rajshahi, Bangladesh
Date: 28 August 2013



Figure 10. A large number of cattle were washed out by the force of the flood.
Location: River Padma, Rajshahi, Bangladesh
Date: 28 August 2013



Figure 11. Many areas of the Sirajgonj district are under great danger from serious river erosion.
Location: Jamuna River, Sirajgonj, Bangladesh
Date: 20 December 2014



Figure 12. This river resident, who lost her house to river erosion, plans to migrate.
Location: Jamuna River, Islampur, Jamalpur, Bangladesh
Date: 5 October 2013



Figure 13. This fisherman on the river Padma doesn't have an alternative place to live if the river swallows up his home.

Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh

Date: 9 September 2014



Figure 14. This fisherman's livelihood depends entirely on the Padma River.

Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh

Date: 9 September 2014



Figure 15. This family may have to move away as the Padma River is about to flood their home.

Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh

Date: 9 September 2014



Figure 16. Children playing on the eroded riverbank.

Location: Jamuna River, Islampur, Jamalpur, Bangladesh

Date: 5 October 2013



Figure 17. A woman bathes in the Padma River.
Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh
Date: 9 September 2014



Figure 18. A riverside resident near the Padma River.
Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh
Date: 9 September 2014



Figure 19. People bathing in the Jamuna River.
Location: Jamuna River, Sirajgonj, Bangladesh
Date: 20 December 2014



Figure 20. An embankment at the Padma River that protects the town of Sirajgonj.
Location: Jamuna River, Sirajgonj, Bangladesh
Date: 20 December 2014



Figure 21. Workers bring sand to dump at the river bank to protect their villages from flooding.
Location: Jamuna River, Islampur, Jamalpur, Bangladesh
Date: 5 October 2013



Figure 22. This view of the river seems tranquil, but during the flood it changes.
Location: Padma River, Mawa, Munshigonj, Bangladesh
Date: 9 September 2014



Figure 23. Man checks the vulnerability of the river bank.

Location: Padma River, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

Date: 26 August 2013



Figure 24. The waves of the Padma River.

Location: Padma River, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

Date: 28 August 2013