

## Communication Pattern of Haor People: An Observatory Study



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# **Communication Pattern of Haor People: An Observatory Study**

Dissertation presented to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,  
Daffodil International University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Master's degree from the Faculty of Social Science in Journalism and Mass  
Communication.



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## Letter of Approval

I have been the supervisor of ID 123-28-145 and the thesis entitled “**Communication Pattern of Haor People: An Observatory Study**”. The MSS thesis contributed to the important field of communication focused on the Communication pattern of the people who lives in haor area, under the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Daffodil International University. This thesis partially fulfills the requirements for obtaining degree of Master’s in Social Science in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Date: October, 2014

.....

Professor Dr. Golam Rahman

Professor and Dean

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

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I also like to thank my wife Sheikh Semonti, friend and classmate Rajib Kumar Datta, Mahabub Allahe, Jubair Moni and other classmates and many others who help me to complete my research paper.

## Declaration

I Md. Kamrul Hasan declare that this report entitled “**Communication Pattern of Haor People: An Observatory Study**” is original and largely derives from findings of field survey and has never been submitted to any other institution of learning for any type of academic qualification other than the Daffodil International University, Bangladesh.

Date: October, 2014

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## **Abstract**

Haor is a wetland in the North Eastern part of Bangladesh which geographically abandoned by waterlog for six months annually. Haor people have a different and unique lifestyle which is different from mainland. I used observatory method where the questionnaire was mostly structured and a few open ended. From this research I found that people in the haor region are having lack of awareness, limited media access, not getting information on due time because of poor transportation system and absence of proper services by Government and NGO's. Giving concentration on these issues can upgrade the communication pattern of the haor region.

**Key words:** *Haor, communication pattern, development, health, waterlog, livelihood*

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## List of Abbreviations and Charts

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non Government Organization
UP	Union Parishad

Chart 1.	Age group of sample population
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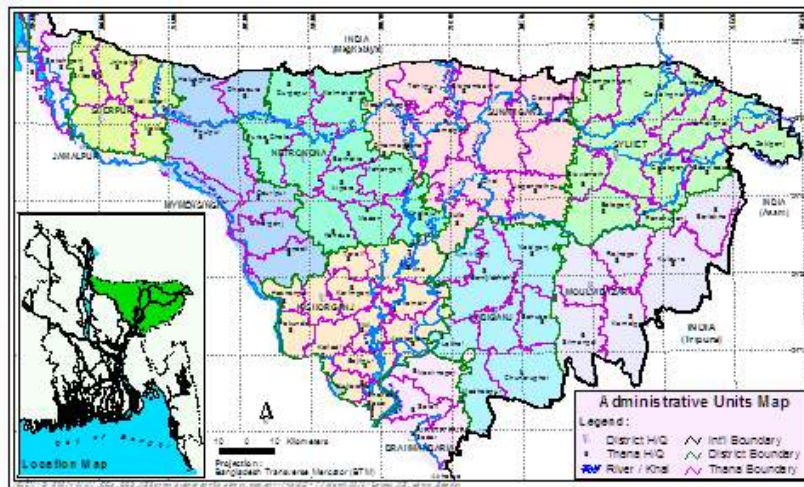


## Chapter 1

## Introduction

There are 7 Districts, 69 Upazilas and 621 Unions in the North-East Region of Bangladesh. The Northern and Eastern side of this region is bounded by the border of India (Meghalaya and Assam); Mymensingh and Gazipur, Narsingdi district, bounded on Southern side and Narayanganj & Comilla districts are bounded on Western side<sup>1</sup>.

Total population of seven haor districts is around 19.37 million (as in 2010<sup>2</sup>) and the average household size is 5.3. The overall population density in the haor districts is 987 per square kilometer which is lower than the average population density in Bangladesh which is 1142<sup>3</sup> per square kilometer.



The overall haor area indicating in the map

Haor (Bengali: হাওর) area are the unique in many ways from the other parts of Bangladesh. The landscape is different from the mainland and people living here are struggling for their living. Though Bangladesh has made commendable progress and met several targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) like poverty eradication, education, health and in economy but the people of haor area are still struggling to achieve the minimum<sup>4</sup>.

1. [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

2 & 3. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, BBS

4. Millennium Development Goals, Bangladesh Progress Report 2013

People living in haor areas are always described as the backward section either in development or in taking development initiatives. The living conditions and life opportunities of the haor people are not as equal as to those living in the mainland. Most of the area are abandoned by waterlog from July to December when there is no scope to work for the farmers. January to June is the dry season when there is no scope to work for the fisherman. Due to these unique geographical conditions, people in haor areas are jobless in most of the time. So expected development is absent and also people are more vulnerable to frequent natural disasters. This vulnerability significantly curtails their capacity to fulfill their basic needs. To increase their life chances in the mainstream societies, the government of Bangladesh is yet to take any coordinated plan of actions for the haor people.

Haor is a wetland ecosystem in the northeastern part of Bangladesh, which physically is a bowl, or saucer shaped shallow depression, also known as a back swamp. In a country where one third of all area can be termed as wetlands, the haor basin is an internationally important wetland ecosystem. It is a mosaic of wetland habitats, including rivers, streams and irrigation canals, large areas of seasonally flooded cultivated plains, and hundreds of haors and beels. This zone contains about 400 haors and beels, varying in size from a few hectares to several thousand hectares. These haors cover around 43% of the haor region.

In terms of mainstream socio-economic development initiatives, they are becoming increasingly marginalized. The constitution of the republic of Bangladesh has pledged a special attention to the disadvantaged community such as the Haor people, but they are yet to enjoy the full access to the essential services by the government<sup>5</sup>.

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5. Master Plan of Haor Area, Summery Report, Vol.1

This study report is based on the participatory research findings in several *hati* (in bangla হাটি, villages appear to be islands in a haor) of Baniachang upazilla in Habiganj district of Bangladesh. The Bengali language has several terms to differentiate between lakes, including Baor, Haor, Jheel and Beel. All four are types of similar freshwater wetlands. The word haor is a regional variation derived from the Bengali word sagor (meaning sea). In parts of Bangladesh, people often pronounce the Bengali alphabet স (sa) as হ (ha), and sometimes গ (ga) as হ (ha). Thus, sagor has become haor.



Two seasons in haor side by side

Haor people have a different and unique lifestyle. Geographically these areas are abandoned by waterlog for six month. During that time farmers have nothing to do and all the other six month when it dries out fisherman has barely can work and so they have to spend their savings for living.



Some fishermen passing leisure time



## Chapter 2

## Literature Review

There are several different research and studies done for the betterment of the lifestyle of the population of the haor. Most of them are related to improvement of economical condition means increase of income but only a few studies directly related to communication pattern.

The "Final Report on Essential Services on Haor Areas and Way Forward<sup>6</sup>" draws some of recommendations for the betterment of the total communication scenario of the people of the haor area. That research come out with work worthy suggestions for the life style of haor area such as '**The communication has to be improved in Haor areas. Good communication and transport facilities are an utmost important for the sustainable development in haor areas**'<sup>7</sup>. Like this the report also made suggestion for agriculture, economy, water and sanitation, health, transportation, in a word total sustainable socio-economic development.

Project from government and as well as NGO's are running for the betterment of infrastructural development. But the projects are not become fully successful because of implementation problem. At the performance line the stakeholders liaison become poorer and thus bring only minimum satisfactory outcome. Time to time the government and NGO's take steps and implement them to these areas which only bring change in the financial support program. But program especially focused on the overall communication pattern of these areas, which leads to complete socio-economical progress is rear.

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6 & 7. Essential Services on Haor Areas and Way Forward, a research report on Nikli upazila, Kishoreganj



## Chapter 3



## **Scope and Significant of the Study**

The haor people's livelihood is different as well as their communication pattern. So, I wanted to find out how they communicate within the community and which way they access to information, health and other economical support. As we know proper communication is the key to development so I titled my research paper as **“Communication Pattern of Haor People: An Observatory Study.”** The findings of the report portray a outrageous picture of essential services in haor areas in Bangladesh. The people in the haor areas have no or little access to the basic services in compare to that of the people in the mainland. There are certain specialized initiative taken in every term of the government for the betterment of the haor people but in reality there are no such fruitful outcomes. So it is an important issue to concentrate on and find out the solution to know the progress and prospect of the hoar area.



## Chapter 4

## **Research Questions**

- What is the prevailing communication pattern in Haor areas?
- How the Haor people access to media?
- Do the people of Hoar area aware about the Union Parishad, UP services?
- How the Haor people use Health and medical facilities?
- Which difficulties have to face for having education access?



## Chapter 5

## Methodology

This research is conducted by participatory observation method. In this part of my paper, I tried to explain about this method and its materials for my research. I also try to explain about my population, sample procedure and rational behind choosing my sample.

Observation can provide rich qualitative data, sometimes described as 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), for example, where the relevant phenomena have been carefully observed and detailed field notes have been recorded. Typically, the researcher would not approach the observation with pre-determined categories or questions in mind. Because of this openness, observation in qualitative research is often referred to as unstructured or sometimes structured.

Structured observation is more likely to be carried out by those operating from a 'positivist' perspective or who at least believe it is possible to clearly define and quantify behaviors. Positivist and critical researchers are likely to be operating from a 'realist' perspective, namely that there is a 'real world' with 'real impact' on people's lives and this can best be studied by looking at social settings directly. In this research my research questions are mostly structured but some of them are open ended. For more real data I used these six method in interview.

Development scholars in the 1970s and 1980s recognize that group activity at the village level is an important mean to village development. Bottom-up communication and horizontal communication between villagers, are viewed to be as important as top-down communication from the central government to the villagers. Mass media communication needs to mix with interpersonal channels and with the organization to the village to foster development in the Third World countries<sup>8</sup>. And thus work out to gear up or speed up the development process of marginalized or remote villages.

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8. Wilbur Schramm: Portrait of a Development Communication Pioneer, Singhal

Wilbur Schramm's conceptualization of the interaction between mass communication and development, become the heart of many national development programs. Developments in communication were brought about by the economic, social and political evaluation and vice-versa. He conceptualized a relationship between development and economic growth, which has been the main guiding paradigm for development programs. Schramm said that mass media in developing countries needed to play three roles- those of watchdog, policy maker, and teacher for change and modernization<sup>9</sup>.

Through this research process it is come out that suitable policy for development of haor people with effective policy tool and their proper usage will mobilize the socio-economic development faster. This lead to improvement of communication pattern of haor people, just like as Schramm's identified. Development is a process which is run with the support of other necessary tools. Like as haor area will make the development in communication by the support of government, NGOs and local leaders policy making, leadership and implementation.

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9. Mass communication and National Development, Wilbur Schramm

## Sampling

I have taken the sample of 35 people in nine *hati* of the Chamakpur Union of Baniachang Upazila in Habiganj district. The covered villages are Makalkandi, Chamakpur, Muslimpur, Gazipur, Baghata, Eklahati, Nagorhati, Soraila and Haruni.

Participatory observation method facilitates this thesis by direct interaction to the targeted population for authentic data which will lead to successful research output.

For this research I specially choose this haor area as these landscape is totally different from the main land or general landscape of Bangladesh. Their lifestyle is different; they have limitations in different arena of day to day life. They have limitations of education, medical or family health facility, transportation thus lead to a underprivileged communication society. By this research work I try to find out their ways of communication patterns in everyday life.



### **Limitation of My Study**

The numbers of participants are only 35 so it may look drawback of my thesis. But during my data collection I found that by their answers most of the participants are representing their whole community, so research participants' number stands at 35 persons. Also it is not easy to reach *hati* to *hati*, as boat is the only transportation system. This waterlog boat transportation take more time than the usual needed at mainland.







## Chapter 6

## Findings and Discussion

Among the participants 29 are male and 06 are female. The majority people are practicing Hinduism among the participants. According to their age group I divided them into six different age groups and they are 15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65-75 years old. Needs of communication are varied among different age groups so I divided them to identify their needs.

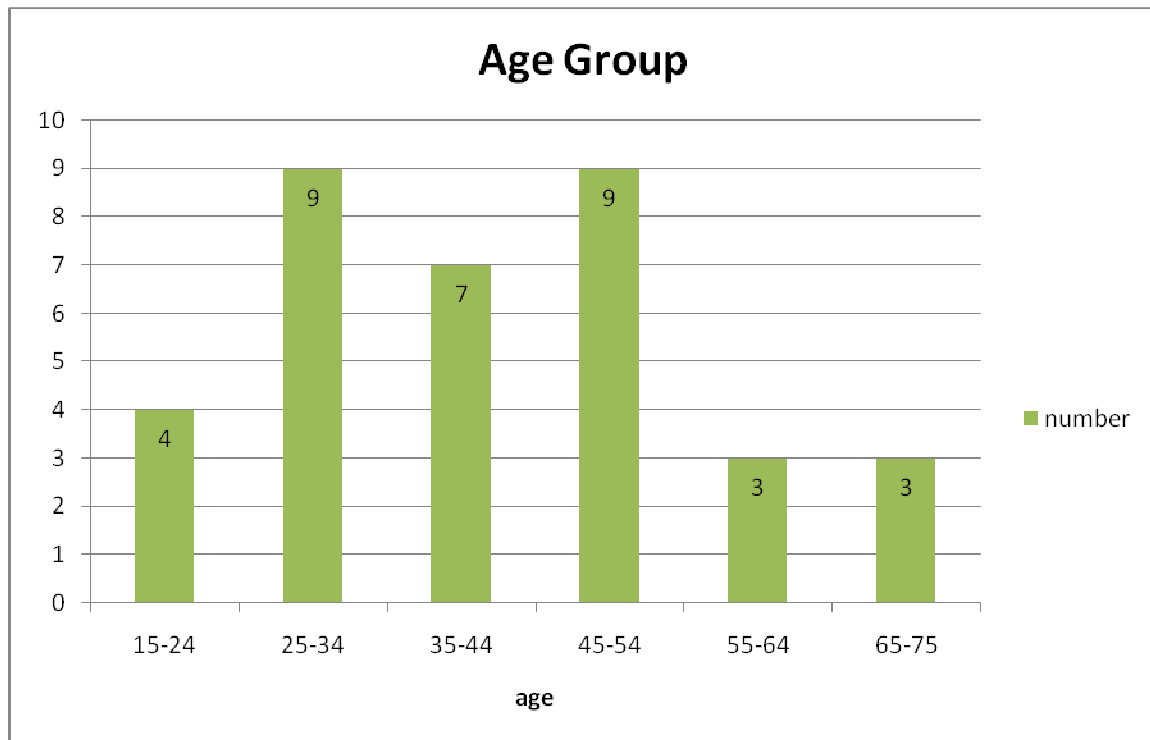


Chart 1. Age group of sample population

## Occupation

Most of the male participants are farmers, some are fisherman, some are student and some are having other occupation but the female are all housewives. Only the farmers and the fisherman earn for their living. But when the lands are under water the farmers become jobless and during the dry season the fisherman have no scoop to fishing. This is happened all the year round, so this period of time it is very difficult to run a family with only a little money which they saved at the period of having work or job.

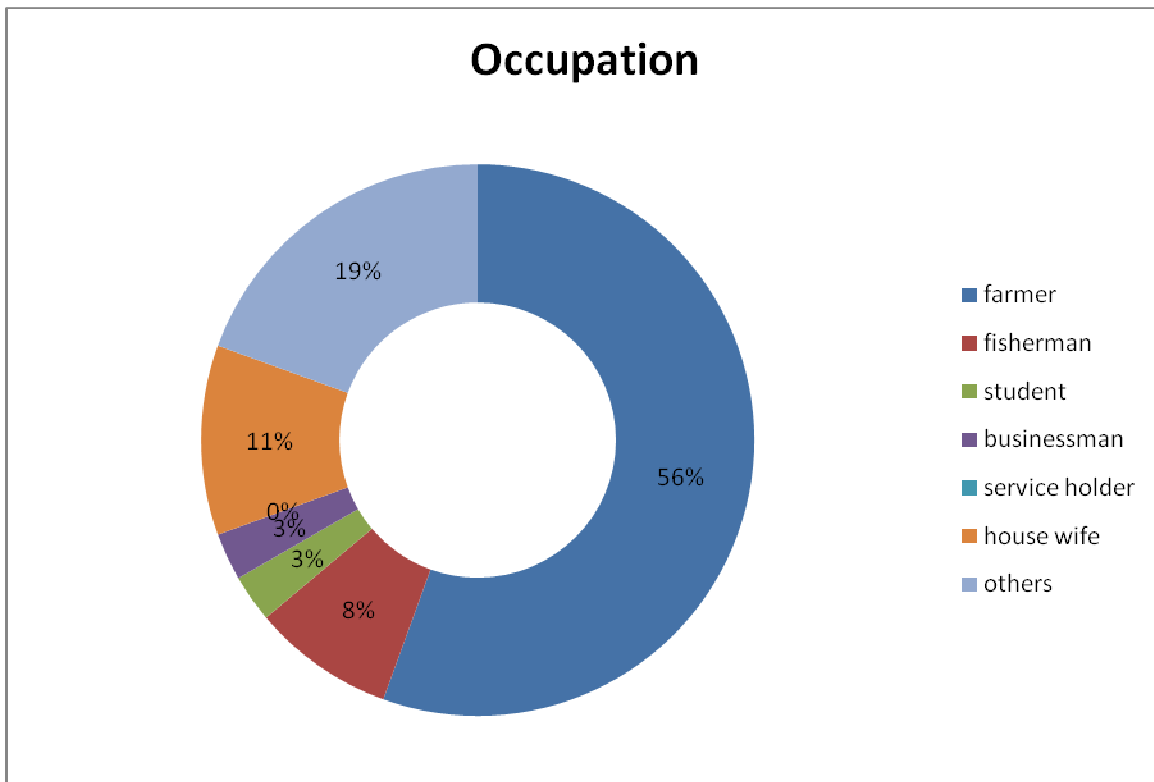


Chart 2. Occupation of Haor people

### Educational Situation

There are a very few land in haor area where people can barely make house for their living. Due to scarcity of Government schools in these areas education rate is very low. At this situation, most of the people who are blessed with the facility of taking education are dropped out at secondary level. Among them, only a few get the opportunity to complete the higher secondary level education.

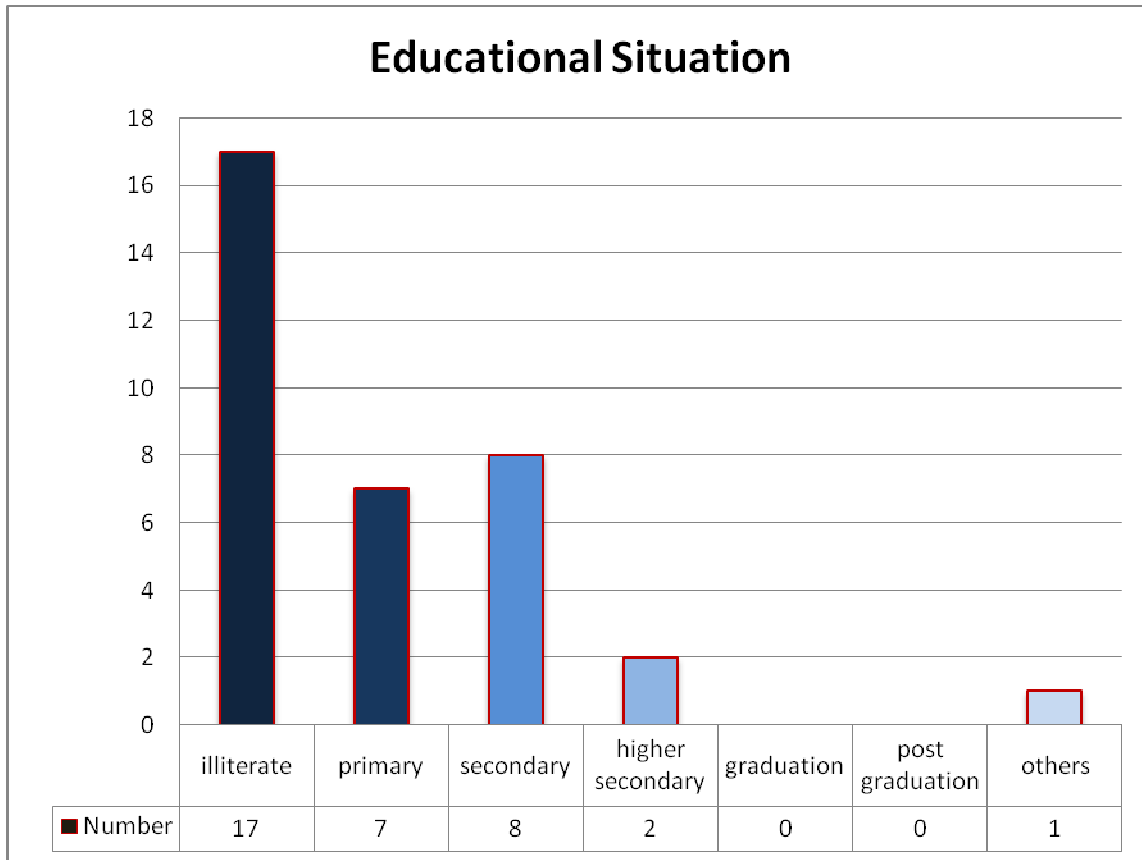


Chart 3. Educational qualification

## Monthly Income and Expense

Thus there are transportation problem and lack of alternative occupational opportunities, their monthly income is very low and this leads them to expense similar to their little income. Among the participants as the woman are housewife they do not earn and students are same.

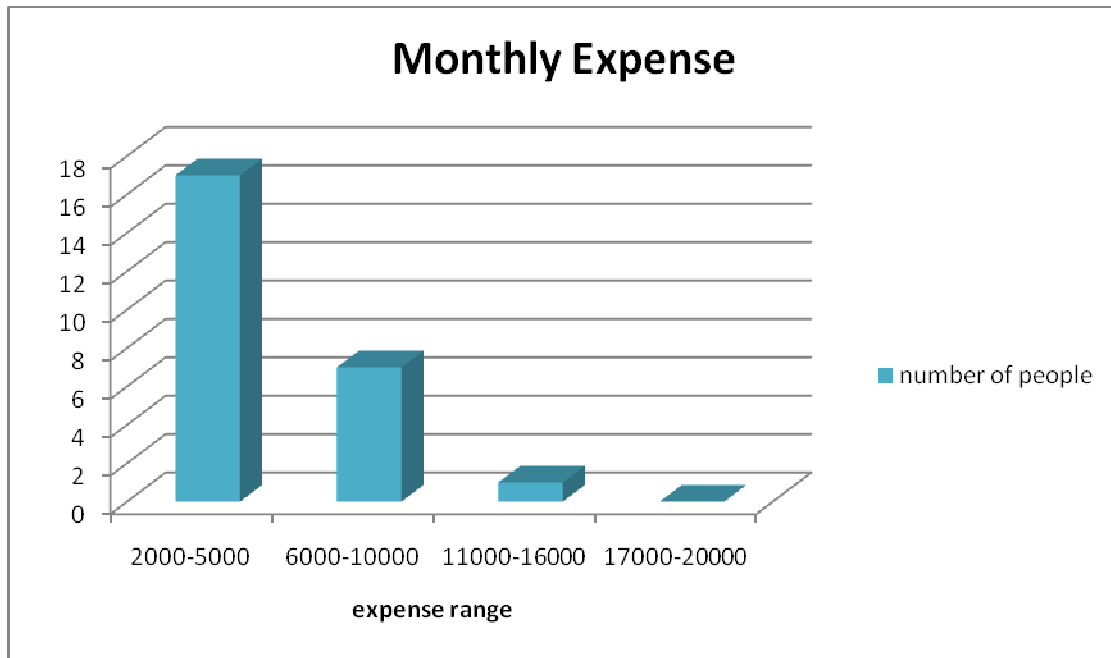


Chart 4. Monthly expense

## Transportation System

The haor area is surrounded with water bodies and roads are very few for communication. Transport and communication is very fragile in haor areas. Waterway is the main route of communication of the people in Haor areas. Boat and trawler are the main modes of transportation. People have to wait for long time to travel to different places. They can hardly travel to the mainland, bazar and in the town. The residents of these areas cannot afford to go to the markets 2-3 times in a week. Normally the dry land people use to visit market places every day. More the distance is less the resident visit market, Union Office, Upazila town and District head quarter. Some people do not have enough money for transportation.



## Access to Market

Market place and Bazar are one of the hubs to gather new information. So I tried to find out how often they went to those places. Again the transportation is the main barrier for them to go to market. The people who are living nearby bazar they regularly go to market and rest of them are not regular because of distance and transportation.

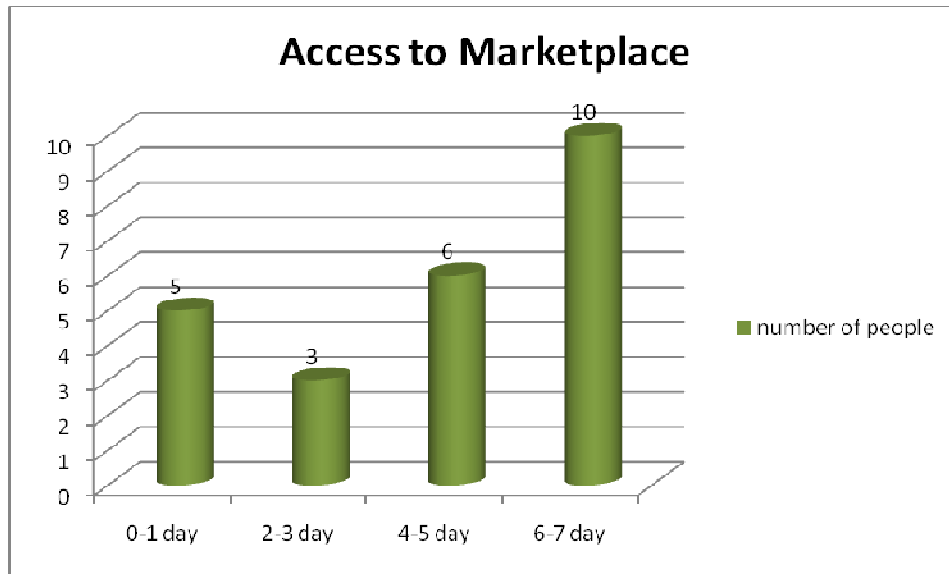


Chart 5. Access to market place



### Access to Union Parishad

Union Parishad, UP is the representation of local government but people can barely go there and the alarming finding is most of the people doesn't have the idea about union parishad's services. Most of them described the UP as the hub for ration goods from government. In most of the are there is no fixed UP offices.

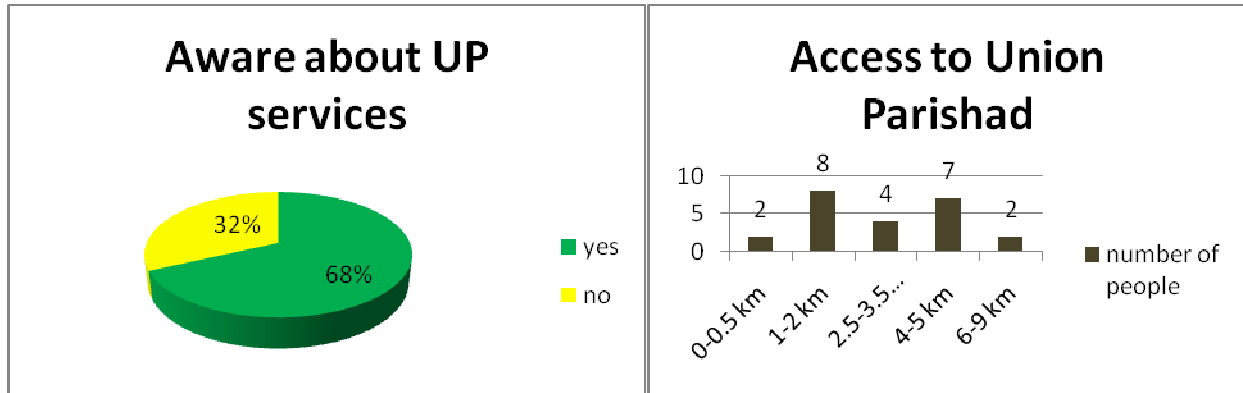
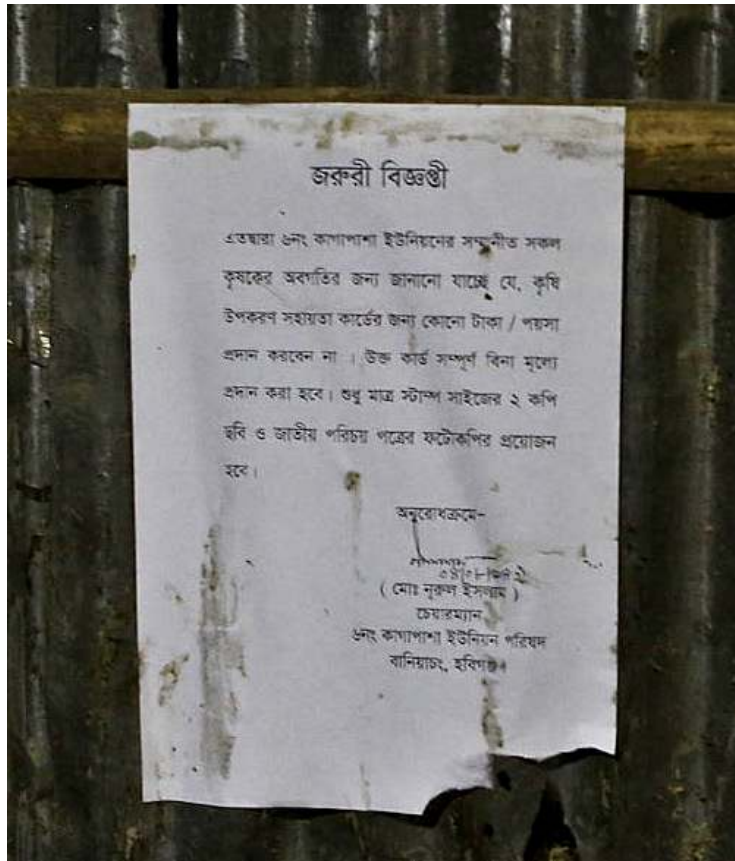


Chart 6. Awareness about UP

Chart 7. Access to UP





### Access to Mainland/District Headquarters

Again the main problem is transportation and people barely can go to the mainland or district headquarter. Only they went to the mainland when they have no choice.

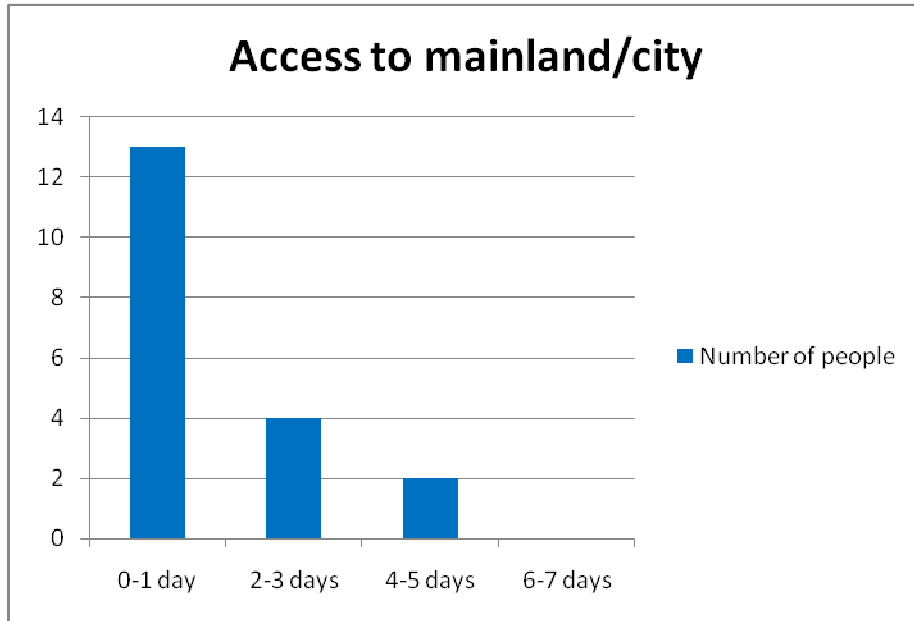


Chart 8. Access to mainland/district headquarters



This boat is heading towards Baniachang Upazila from chomokpur

## Health Access

Health and medical services are also poor. There were no health facilities in the haor areas. Due to poor transportation system the haor people hardly go out for medical support. The number of people is very low who are going to the government hospital for medication. Hospitals are very far from the residents of haor people, so they take support from the nearest bazaar's medical store or if possible from nearest possible NGO's medical team. Also sometimes they get medical support from the 'Sastho Apa', (a government or NGO lady worker for giving medical/family health support).

Due to the unavailability of the boats and trawlers, people with urgent health needs cannot be carried to the hospitals/ health complexes situated in the mainland. Women are most vulnerable to access medical support during their maternal emergency. There is no such specialized even a minimum health support for the women as well as others. Either they have to go to upazila hospital, which is 8 to 15 KM away from their *hati*. But upazila hospital facility is also not enough for emergency situation.



During labor period they have to suffer a lot to get medical facilities as these areas hardly have government hospital or family planning center or community health support center. These poor transport and communication is the cause of the loss of many lives in Haor areas. Due to the lack of transportation, the incidence of death of children and

pregnant women is higher and is quite unfortunate. As would be expected, traditional birth attendants deliver most births. Only cases thought in advance to be complicated are taken to hospitals. So, if they want to go district level hospital it's 22-30 KM away from their residence.

There are very few amount of NGO lead maternal health services presence in these area. Among them the people I interviewed refer *MaMoni* by 'Save The Children' and *floating delivery center* by BRAC. Such facility providers are very few and cannot cover the whole area.



### Communication Medium

As haor is distant area from the main land and because of poor transportation facilities they go to bazaars on a very few occasions. When it is needed only then they go to such places. As we know that bazaar or market is a gathering of mass people, so it is a hub for infotainment. Thus they are hardly visit the bazaars so they are far away from information and as well as entertainment based on information.

These effects to their day-to-day life and as well as use of communication medium. Lack of educational institutes the haor people literacy rate is very low, this also keeping them away from the light of huge volume of information and technology. Normally no newspaper is available in the haor areas, only during the harvesting season of autumn (dry season) some people gather weekly newspaper.

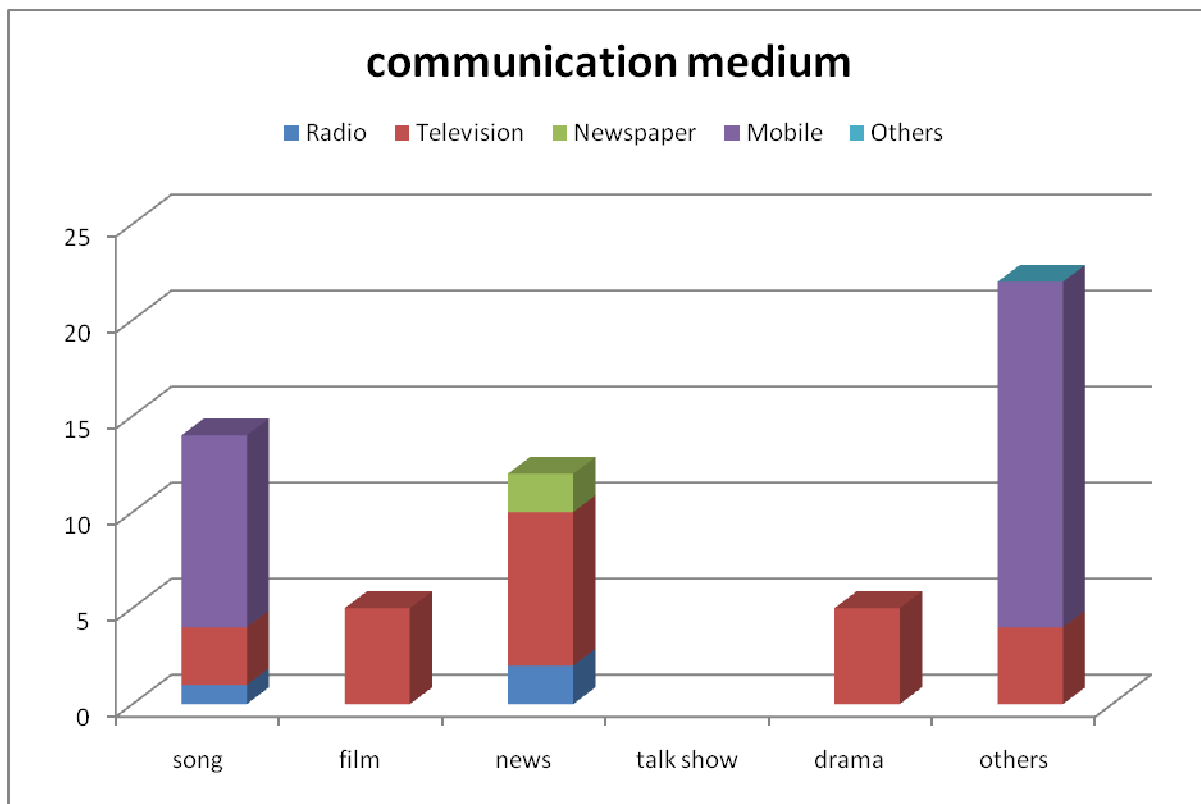


Chart 9. Communication Medium



There is some ekla *hati* (single village) in the haor area who survived alone. Both are same house but in a different time.



## Chapter 7



## Conclusion

To improve haor people's life the must-needed thing is to improve their communication system, transportation and access to information. A majority of Haor people does not get essential services provided by the government. Although having access to government essential services is their constitutional right, Bangladesh government is yet to ensure that. Depriving Haor people from their fundamental human rights can be seen as a violation of human rights by the state. Make the haor people aware about their own rights and inform them how to press demand from the government bodies to ensure their rights.

Given the special features in Haor areas, an effective coordination between government and NGOs is needed to ensure the rights to essential services of the Haor people. The number of education institutes and hospitals should be increased. These institutions should be located in backward areas instead of the semi-urban centers. Regular monitoring by the central government authorities are needed to ensure quality essential services to the people. Government and NGO's like BRAC, POPI, Swisscontact, Concern worldwide etc should take massive awareness program to the community so that they will be motivated enough for own development with the help of the provided

service of these institutions. And also there is lack of work opportunities for improving haor people's access to media and information. We need to concentrate on these issues for the upgrading the livelihood of these marginalized community.



BRAC's boat school and floating delivery center.



## Chapter 8



## Steps for Better Communication

For the betterment of the communication system of the haor people different steps can activate thus lead socio-economical progress of these regions. Through this research the following steps can draw better results in communication pattern of the haor population:

- LGED taking responsibility for the maintenance of Union and Upazila roads (but building roads of concrete will minimize maintenance requirements).
- Local government, Union Parishads taking responsibility for the maintenance of village roads and make people aware about the services of Union Parishad.
- Community members and individual households taking responsibility for village protection works.
- Set up medical center or family health center such places so that the *hati* people can get easy access. Especially give services for maternity and child health related services.
- Market management committees taking responsibility for the management and upkeep of rural markets.
- Water bodies user groups – registered as cooperatives, managing water bodies held on long term leases. Thus they can earn sufficient to fulfill their basic requirements.
- To increase the logistic support of the hospitals to reduce the mother and child mortality rate in these areas.
- Establish at least secondary level school facilities and make sure that the people are having the Educational facility. and
- Other local service providers can provide a range of additional services as required.



## Chapter 9

## Appendices

### সাফাংকারের জন্য প্রশ্নমালা (Questionnaire for Interview)

### হাওড়াসীদেব যোগাযোগের ধরণ: একটি সমীক্ষা Communication Pattern of Haor People: An Observation

(সংগৃহীত তথ্যাবলী কেবলমাত্র গবেষণা কাজে ব্যবহৃত হবে এবং এর গোপনীয়তা রক্ষা করা হবে।) The collected information will use only for research purpose

#### ব্যক্তিগত তথ্যাবলী (General Information)

1. নামঃ (Name).....
2. লিঙ্গঃ (Gender)
  - a. পুরুষ (Male)
  - b. মহিলা (Female)
3. বয়সঃ(Age)
  1. ১৫-২৪ (15-24)
  2. ২৫-৩৪ (25-34)
  3. ৩৫-৪৪ (35-44)
  4. ৪৫-তদুর্ধ্ব (45-above)
4. পেশাঃ (Occupasion)
  1. কৃষক (Farmer)
  2. জেলে (Fisherman)
  3. ছাত্র (Student)
  4. ব্যবসায়ী (Business)
  5. চাকুরিজিবি (Job)
  - 6.অন্যান্য(Others)
5. ধর্মঃ (Religion)
  - a. ইসলাম (Islam)
  - b. হিন্দু (Hindu)
  - c. অন্যান্য.... (Others)

6. শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা (Education)

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. নিরক্ষর (Illiterate)            | 5. স্নাতক (Under Graduate) |
| 2. প্রাথমিক (Primary)              | 6. স্নাতকোত্তর (Graduate)  |
| 3. মাধ্যমিক (Secondary)            | 7. অন্যান্য (Other)        |
| 4. উচ্চ-মাধ্যমিক(Higher Secondary) |                            |

7. মাসিক আয়ঃ (Income).....

8. মাসিক ব্যয়ঃ (Expenditure).....

**হাওড়াসীদেৰ মোগামোগেৰ ধরণ সম্পর্কিত তথ্যাবলী**  
**(Communication related Information of Haor people)**

1. হাট/বাজার আপনার বাড়ি থেকে কতদূর? (Distance of Hat/Market from your residence?)
2. আপনি কতদিন পর পর হাট/বাজার যান? (How often you go to hat/market?)
3. উপজেলা শহর আপনার বাড়ি থেকে কতদূর? (Distance of upazila town from your residence?)
4. আপনি কতদিন পর পর উপজেলা শহরে যান? (How often you go to upazila town?)
5. জেলা শহর আপনার বাড়ি থেকে কতদূর? (Distance of district town from your residence?)
6. আপনি কতদিন পর পর জেলা শহরে যান? (How often you go to district town?)
7. আপনার বাড়ি থেকে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ কতদূরে? (Distance of union parisad office from your house?)
8. আপনি কি জানেন ইউনিয়ন পরিষদে কি কি সেবা দেওয়া হয়? (Do you know the services provided by the union parisad office?)
9. ৮ নং প্রশ্নের উত্তর হ্যাঁ হলে, কি কি সেবা দেওয়া হয়? (If the answer of question no 8 is yes, then what are the services?)

10. আপনি কি ইউনিয়ন পরিষদে যান? (Do you go to the Union Parisad office?)
11. ১০ নং প্রশ্নের উত্তর হ্যাঁ হলে, কেন যান? (If the answer of question no 10 is yes, then why you go?)
12. কোন বিরোধ হলে মিমাংসার জন্য কার কাছে যান? (To whom you go for solution when any conflict occurs?)
13. মিমাংসা না হলে কি করেন? (If not solved what you do?)
14. কোন সমস্যায় পড়লে পরামর্শের জন্য কার কাছে যান? (To whom you go for solution when any problems arise?)
15. টাকা পয়সার সমস্যা হলে কার কাছে যান? (To whom you go for financial support?)
16. ছোট খাটো অসুস্থ হলে কোন স্বাস্থ্যসেবা গ্রহন করেন/কোথায় যান? (To whom/where you go for general medication?)
17. বড় ধরনের অসুখ হলে কোন স্বাস্থ্যসেবা গ্রহন করেন/কোথায় যান? (To whom/where you go for emergency medication?)
18. গর্ভবতী মহিলাদের স্বাস্থ্যসেবার জন্য কোথায় যান? (Where you go for maternal health support?)
19. বিনোদনের জন্য কোন মাধ্যম ব্যবহার করেন? (Media access and use)

গণমাধ্যম ব্যবহার চার্টঃ (Chart of mass media access and use)

ক্রঃ নঃ (S N)	মাধ্যম Medium	বিষয় (Topic)					
		গান (Song)	সিনেমা (Film)	খবর (News)	টক শো (Talk show)	নাটক (Drama)	অন্যান্য (Others)
1	রেডিও (Radio)						
2	টেলিভিশন (Television)						
3	সংবাদপত্র (Newspaper)						
4	মোবাইল (Mobile)						
5	অন্যান্য... (Others)						



## Chapter 10



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