



CHILDREN OF THE RIVER

**Advisor**

**Dr. Mst Umme Habiba Fahmina Karim**  
Mahidol University, Thailand

**Photo & Data Collection**

**Shobhajit Chowdhury**  
Mahidol University, Thailand

**Technical Support**

**Atiqur Rahaman Shadhin**  
**Ronald Okiring**  
**Uulzhan Bekturova**  
**Saniyat Turjo**

**Project Coordination**

**GC-RLC Human Rights Working Group**

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*Only 12 years old, she carries a heavy gas cylinder through the narrow lanes of a drain in Sirajganj slum to help her family to cook. She dropout from school. Her father is a rickshaw puller in Dhaka and her mother managing household chores, she now bears responsibilities far beyond her age.*



*“I’m 17 years old. Our home and agriculture land were lost to the Jamuna River for the erosion. Now we live in a slum near the river in Sirajganj. I work as a daily cleaner for the municipality and had to drop out of school four years ago when we lost everything.”*



*In flood-affected Sirajganj, two young boys fish with their father and uncle to help feed their families. With schools closed and livelihoods disrupted during flood, many children are forced into survival roles, exposing them to child labor risks. Their voices remain unheard in disaster planning that rarely includes the realities of children.*



*“I lost my father two years ago. He used to sell cotton candy in our village to support us. After he passed away, I had no choice but to take over his work so I could look after my mother and younger sister. I dreamt of going to school, but now that dream feels impossible. Every day, I walk through villages selling candy — not books, not pencils, just trying to survive.”*





*In the remote char areas along the Jamuna River, access to education remains a major challenge. There are not enough schools, and many children walk long distances or drop out entirely due to the lack of nearby facilities.*

*In a flood-prone area of Sirajganj, a young girl carefully carries her newborn brother to the nearest community clinic for a check-up. With limited access to transportation and healthcare, children often take on caregiving responsibilities in their families.*





*As the sun rises, a young boy holds a heavy boat stands beside his father in a fishing boat. Once a playful child, he now spends his days helping his family survive, rarely smiling, and often lost in thought.*



*In the char lands of the Jamuna River, children face daily struggles with poor communication infrastructure. Most of the roads are made of mud and sand, making travel difficult—especially during the rainy season. These unsafe paths often prevent children from reaching schools, clinics, and safe spaces.*

*In many disaster-affected communities, parents are not fully aware of the long-term importance of children's education. As a result, children often face neglect when it comes to learning opportunities and support. Their voices are rarely heard—either within their families or by those responsible for planning and decision-making.*





*Children often have to travel by boat on their own just to reach school. This daily journey is not only risky but also reflects the challenges they face in accessing education.*



*While national policies exist to protect and support children, they are rarely implemented effectively at the local level. Additionally, funding for child-focused Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) remains limited and insufficient to address their specific needs.*

*On many occasions, children are forced to cross rivers to reach school, health centers, or other essential services. Without safe and reliable transport, these daily journeys put their safety and well-being at risk.*

*Driven by poverty and disaster, many children are forced into work to support their families—often earning only a small amount for long hours of labor. In these harsh conditions, they are deprived of proper nutrition, education, and emotional support. The worsening effects of climate change, like floods and river erosion, have made their lives even more difficult and uncertain.*





*In a char along the Jamuna River, a young boy runs a small shop beside his home to support his family. Displaced by floods and struggling with poverty, he was forced to drop out of school and take on adult responsibilities at an early age. His day begins with arranging goods and serving customers, while other children his age prepare for school.*

*Children frequently suffer from diarrhea, colds, and other waterborne diseases, especially during floods. However, access to adequate healthcare and medical support in these areas remains extremely limited.*





## PROTECT EVERY CHILDHOOD

*In every disaster, children carry the heaviest burden—  
yet their needs are overlooked, their voices unheard,  
and their futures uncertain. It's time to plan with  
children, not just for them.*

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