



## An Assessment of Potential Numbers of CPHHs Living on Island Chars in Chapai Nawabganj, Rajshahi and Natore Districts

### Background

The Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) successfully lifted 55,000 households out of extreme poverty in the Jamuna chars. The second phase (CLP-2), that began on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, seeks to improve livelihoods, incomes and food security for a further one million extremely poor and vulnerable people living on remote char islands. CLP-2 will provide a core package of support to 67,000 extreme poor core participant households (CPHHs) in five "new" working districts as well as in Kurigram and Gaibandha. During the inception phase, CLP's Innovation, Monitoring and Learning Division (IML) conducted a survey to assess the potential number of CPHHs in these districts and concluded that there would likely only be about 42,000 CPHHs meeting the current selection criteria (first tier) on island chars<sup>1</sup>.

To address the shortfall (approximately 25,000 CPHHs), possible options include:

- supporting a second tier of households (with a lower value core package)<sup>2</sup>;
- working in additional districts;
- downsizing and focusing only on those CPHHs that meet the current CLP selection criteria (i.e. approximately 42,000 CPHHs).

To explore the possibility of the second option; expanding west along the Padma River adding additional districts, CLP conducted an assessment to estimate the likely number of CPHHs (first tier) living on island chars in the districts of Chapai Nawabganj, Natore and Rajshahi.

### Methodology

In January 2011, a team consisting of two staff from the CLP Operations Division and two CLP Data Entry and Monitoring Officers (DEMOs) conducted a rapid assessment of the three proposed districts with the objectives of identifying:

- the number of island chars in the districts of Chapai Nawabganj, Natore and Rajshahi;
- the number of households living on these island chars;
- the number of households that would meet the CLP selection criteria (first tier);
- the NGOs working on these island chars (and their core activities) – this to prevent potential duplication.

The team sourced information from interviews with a variety of stakeholders in three stages, first at Upazila headquarters, secondly at union level and finally at household level. In the 19 villages visited, the team conducted door-to-door household visits to estimate the

<sup>1</sup> Karward and Islam (August 2010), CLP-2 Districts: An Assessment of the number of CPHHs and Island Char Villages.

<sup>2</sup> See Karward, Islam and Hossain (February 2011), The Baseline Status of Cohort 2.2 First and Second Tier Households.

percentage that would meet the criteria. At union and village level, where possible, the team met with local NGOs working in the area to discuss NGO activities in the three districts, gain an understanding of the area and population sizes, key NGO activities and identify potential overlaps in service provision.

### Results

The key data found are presented in Table 1. The total number of island chars in Rajshahi, Natore and Chapai Nawabganj is 34, of which, two are partial island chars<sup>3</sup>.

Approximately 56,232 households reside on these island chars in 193 villages. Of the households, 13,109 (23%) would likely meet CLP selection criteria (first tier). From interviews and observations, the team found that Chapai Nawabganj was the most vulnerable to flooding and erosion, followed by Rajshahi.

Table 1: Estimated number of potential CPHHs

District	# Island chars	Estimated # households	Estimated # CPHHs
Rajshahi	11	14,850	3,258
Natore	2	2,690	1,076
Chapai Nawabganj	21	38,692	8,775
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>56,232</b>	<b>13,109</b>

Several NGOs currently work on these island chars; their core activities include microcredit, disaster preparedness, water and sanitation programmes and solar panel initiatives. No significant livelihoods programmes were found in these areas. Very few NGOs operate in Rajshahi and the assessment team reported that due to the close proximity to the Indian border, (which runs through the Ganges-Padma River), many of the char dwellers in this district engage in the illegal movement of cattle across the border, which is a risky livelihood, especially when border controls are tight.

### Conclusion

The number of households meeting the CLP first tier selection criteria in Chapai Nawabganj, Rajshahi and Natore districts is estimated at 13,109 households out of approximately 56,232 households, on 34 island chars. Current NGO activity does not reach the extreme poor on the remote island chars, nor do the existing programmes offer initiatives to build sustainable livelihoods, similar to those of CLP.

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<sup>3</sup> In this study island chars are defined as either year round island char villages that are never attached to the mainland in any season, or char villages which appear to be attached to the mainland for a short period of time during extreme dry seasons. Partial island chars remain attached to the mainland throughout the year.