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## FORCED TO WORK: RIVERBANK EROSION DISPLACEMENT AND THE RISE OF CHILD LABOR IN JAMUNA CHARLAND BANGLADESH

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore how a large number of *charland* children in the Jamuna riverine habitat are compelled to enter the labor force. Using interviews with purposively selected households and children, along with observations, focus group discussions (FGDs), case studies, and informal discussions, the study combines qualitative and quantitative data to provide a clear picture of the issue. Findings show that children in Char Chhinna village of Sirajganj District are displaced repeatedly every year due to riverbank erosion. After losing their original habitat, some families (*uthuli*) stay with others without payment, while others (*chukani*) pay for temporary shelter. Continuous displacement causes severe losses, including standing crops, agricultural land, household belongings, social networks, livestock, and other essential assets, pushing *charland* parents to send their children into both paid and unpaid labor involving odd and unpredictable jobs, to survive their households within the harsh Jamuna riverbed environment. In this isolated and disaster-prone *charland*, where there are poor roads, no electricity, limited media access, and no institutional support, awareness about children's potential remains low. As a result, child labor limits access to education, recreation, and increases the risk of early marriage, ultimately harming their physical, psychological, social, educational, and recreational development.



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