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A PPGIS method for mapping multiple community displacements to riverbank erosion

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Between 1973 and 2007 the Jamuna River in Bangladesh has eroded a net 77 480 hectares of land. It is a chronic hazard in national terms and a repeated disaster at the local. The poster depicts the development of a Public Participatory Geographic Information System (PPGIS) technique used to gather and depict local spatial history, engineering intervention and RS imagery to understand historical community displacement due to the braided Brahmaputra-Jamuna River. Spatial and temporal knowledge of the cumulative social dislocation caused by displacements over the period of generations has not as yet been explored in the context of the river erosion hazard. Yet is one of its distinguishing features.

The work is drawn from interdisciplinary doctoral research into community and institutional engagement with the hazard, through technological development, regional politics and local lived experience. The PPGIS method traces the movement of 108 social institutions (educational and religious) through repeated displacement events, community coalescence and fragmentation. Results were mapped onto local land ownership records and integrated with later qualitative research in 2 ways A) through providing a basis for purposive sampling of the localities to be explored in depth, and B) through their presentation amongst vulnerable and professionally concerned communities. The method has broader application in situations of community scale displacement, natural or otherwise.